

HOW TO: a guide to roasting and flavoring your favorite vegetables

TAUNTON'S

fine Cooking

NOVEMBER 2007 NO. 88

FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO COOK

a make-ahead Thanksgiving

3 secrets to
juicy turkey

tips for perfect
piecrust

how to: hearty
bean soups

a new wave
of spinach
salads

the fastest
cinnamon
rolls

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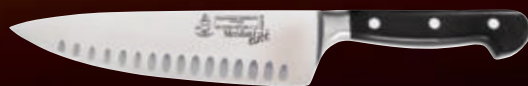


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Chocolate Espresso Pecan Pie



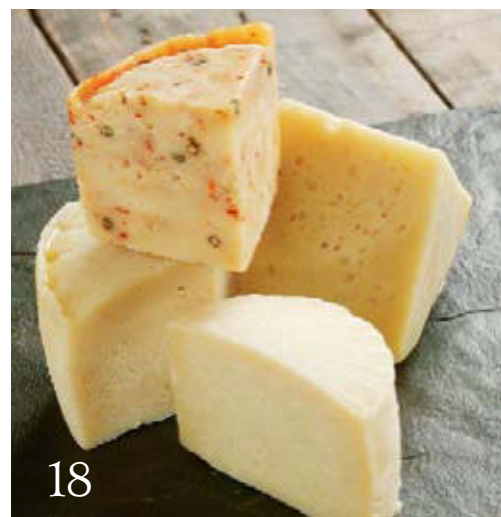
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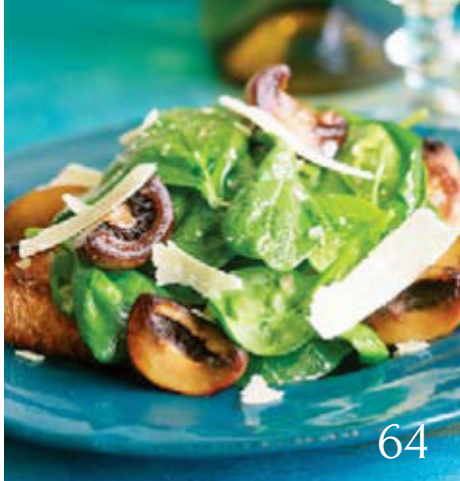


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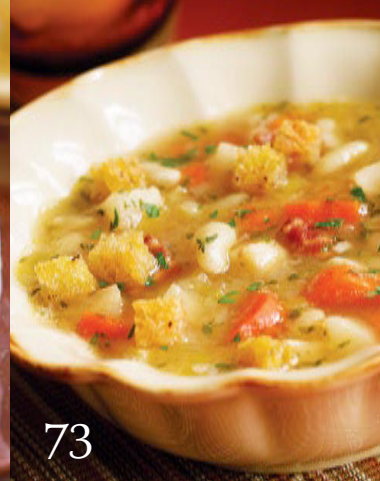
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Can be completely prepared ahead but may need reheating and a garnish to serve
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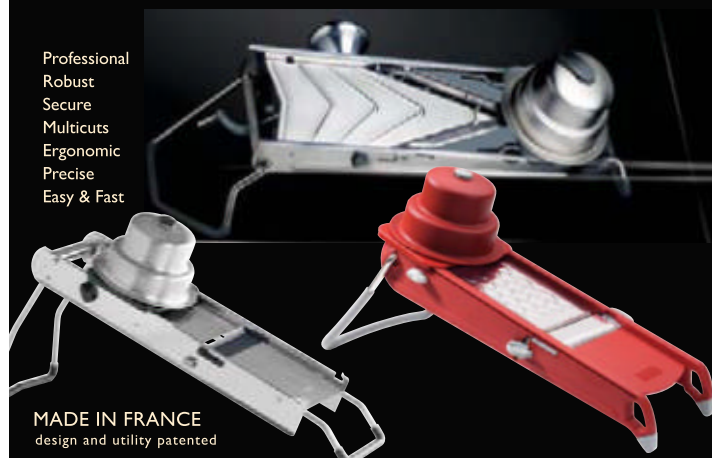
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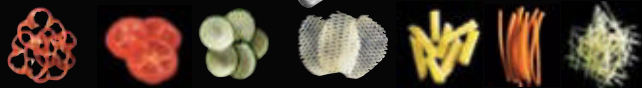
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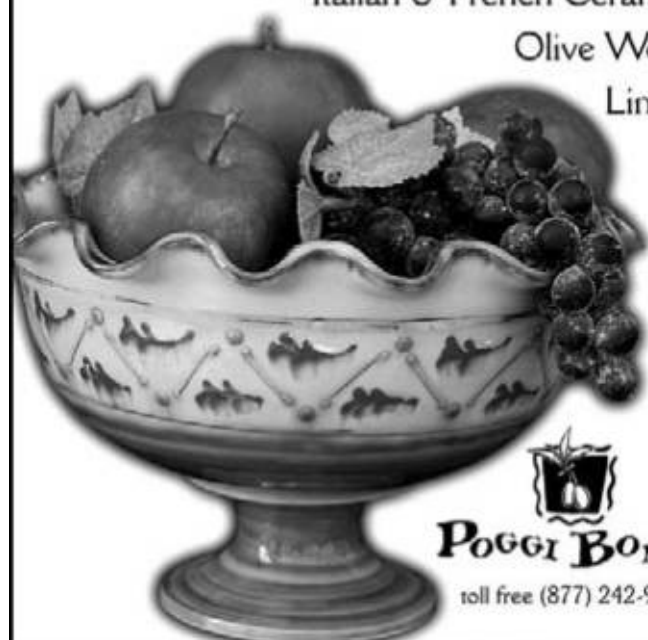
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A Cook's Season

Sometimes it seems as if it's all about the turkey at this time of year. It's true, Thanksgiving does occupy a lot of our cooking brain space. But we can't forget what a great season this is for all kinds of cooking. The farmers' markets are still going strong, and days are cool and crisp, perfect for making hearty bean soups (p. 73), roasting all kinds of vegetables (p. 53), or spending a little time baking (you'll definitely want to try the Pecan Pineapple Upside-Down Cake on p. 60).

To put all these delicious recipes together for friends and family, check out our menu ideas below. Just remember to check the yield on each recipe, as you may need to double or halve it to suit your needs. Oh, and when it comes time to think turkey, turn to our great make-ahead menu from chef Ris Lacoste on p. 44. Her turkey is so juicy that it's worth cooking any time of year.



Two weeknight entertaining ideas

Each of these vibrantly flavored meals is built around a fast-cooking stir-fry, which you can prep while roasting the side vegetables in the oven.

Spicy Beef with Peanuts & Chiles,
p. 98a

Roasted Green Beans with Sesame Salt, p. 57

To drink: A deeply flavored red like the 2004 Peter Lehmann Barossa Shiraz, Australia, \$17

Orange Chicken with Scallions, p. 98a

Roasted Broccoli Crowns with Ginger-Lemon Soy Splash, p. 57

To drink: A crisp Riesling like the 2005 Gunderloch Kabinett Jean Baptiste, Germany, \$16

For dessert: If you like, bake the Apple Crisp with Pecans & Orange on p. 61, but if you're pressed for time, why not serve vanilla ice cream with chocolate sauce and chopped, toasted pecans?

Elegant & easy fall dinner

Pork tenderloin makes a sophisticated main dish, especially when paired with seasonal vegetables, simply roasted and seasoned. The poundcake can be made up to two days ahead.

Pork Tenderloin with Sage & Marsala Sauce, p. 26

Roasted Butternut Squash with Moroccan-Style Spice Rub, p. 56

Roasted Mushrooms with Toasted Garlic & Coriander Oil, p. 57

Bourbon-Glazed Brown Sugar Pecan Poundcake, p. 62

To drink: A spicy Zinfandel like the 2005 Dry Creek Vineyard Heritage, California, \$19

Three hearty soup & salad pairings

Pair one of Molly Stevens's bean and vegetable soups with a salad for a comforting midday or evening meal.

French Farmers' Soup, p. 74

Spinach Salad with Apples, Dried Apricots & Pappadam Croutons, p. 66

Minestrone, p. 74

Spinach Salad with Chicken, Cashews, Ginger & Fried Wontons, p. 65

Cabbage & White Bean Soup,
p. 74

Warm Spinach Salad with Eggs, Bacon & Croutons, p. 67



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from the editor

Building Flavor From the Bottom Up

One day a soup wandered into my office. It showed up, unannounced, in a little paper cup on my desk. It was still hot, and I rummaged through my cabinets to find a spoon. I took a sip and stopped. Ahhh. There was that magic thing, that alchemy that happens in a broth that's been infused with layers of flavor—earthy beans, smoky bacon, sweet onions, piny rosemary.

Not long after, an editor followed the soup into my office, and I found out what the recipe was. It was the first test from Molly Stevens's "Cooking Without Recipes" article on hearty bean soups (see p. 73). I wasn't surprised it tasted so good, knowing that Molly had incorporated no less than seven places to boost flavor in her technique for making these soups. Starting with a rich base of sautéed aromatics and finishing with a flourish of fresh herbs, grated cheese, and crisp croutons, these soups didn't stand a chance at being dull.

Knowing how to build flavor is one of the secrets to becoming a great home cook. It's that thing that makes your friends ask why your recipes always turn out better than theirs. It's what makes the difference between so-so and sensational. It's what we try to teach you in every issue of *Fine Cooking*. Like this one.

Take chef Ris Lacoste's Thanksgiving turkey. While the rest of us might try brining or an herb butter under the skin to keep our turkeys juicy, she does both. And then she roasts the turkey under foil for the first half of cooking. Because of all three of those steps, that turkey has the juiciest, tastiest breast meat I've ever had. And that's even without the last layer of flavor: the rich Pinot Noir gravy she makes from the pan drippings.

And if you want a quick lesson in flavor boosting, check out our test kitchen manager Jennifer Armentrout's "Essential Guide to Roasting Vegetables," on p. 53. Jennifer doesn't stop at oil, salt, and pepper. She's got six ways, from spice rubs and infused oils to drizzling sauces and compound butters, to add flavor both before and after roasting her vegetables.

Admittedly, talking about great flavor in every issue can get a little frustrating for editors, since there are only so many ways to say delicious. Every once in a while, we run to check the thesaurus to see if another "flavor" word has come along. There are a few, but they tend to sound a little silly. So I hope you'll forgive me when I say, "Have a tasty Thanksgiving."

—Susie Middleton, editor

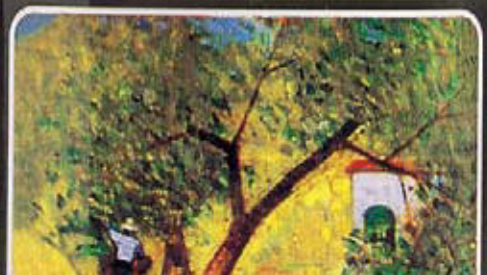


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from our readers

Delicious, to say the least

Your July issue (*Fine Cooking* #86) is a home run. I have tried nearly every recipe in this issue, and the results have been amazing. The recipes from the "Grilling for a Crowd" special section are delicious, to say the least. And those lemon cheesecake squares—wow! They're great made with the lemon flavor, but my family and friends are split between which they like better—lemon or lime (lime needs a few drops of green food coloring). I could go on and on about the cobbles (p. 60), the Grilled Asian Pork Tenderloin with Peanut Sauce (p. 78a), the Quesadillas with Roasted Poblanos & Onions (p. 21), the grilled swordfish, (p. 40), etc. Thanks for putting together a great magazine.

—Gina Vaccaro, via email

A finishing touch for a simple sauce

I have been an avid reader and subscriber to *Fine Cooking* for many years, and I love the magazine. This is the first time I have felt compelled to send in a letter to the editor. When I lived in Italy, I learned to love salsa cruda ("No-Cook Tomato Sauces," *Fine Cooking* #87, p. 38), and I make it whenever there are perfect tomatoes available.

I just wanted to let you know that you have left out the finishing touch that makes this sauce so wonderful. This is a step I learned in southern Italy: After portioning out individual servings of the pasta and sauce, top each with about 2 tablespoons of fresh, soft breadcrumbs that have been browned in olive oil. It's the perfect final touch.

—Sharon Furman, via email

How about barbecuing alternatives?

I really enjoy your publication, with its bright, easy-to-read pages and excellent photography. I look forward to receiving each issue and would only wish that it were published more often.

Now about the August/September issue (*Fine Cooking* #87): I loved the No-Cook Tomato Sauce. And Pam Anderson's "Chicken Thighs Take a Turn on the Grill" (p. 30) exemplified, as usual, her clear, concise information and directions. We don't barbecue, however, and I suspect a lot of other people don't either. People living in apartments or condos, for example, may have no place to barbecue or it may be

prohibited. It would be helpful if all barbecue articles offered an alternative cooking method—oven roasting, baking, or broiling. Just a thought. Keep up the good work.

—Joan Nazif, Vancouver, Canada

Editors' reply: Thanks for the suggestion, Joan. In the meantime, if you would like to cook Pam's chicken thighs inside, try broiling them. Set an oiled rack about 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler. Spread the thighs out on a rack set inside a foil-covered rimmed baking sheet or on the insert of a broiler pan. Broil until the thighs have plumped up and are browned in places, 5 to 6 minutes per side.

Keeping the flavor, losing the fat

First, let me tell you I have been a subscriber to *Fine Cooking* since issue # 22 (Aug./Sept. 1997), and I look forward to receiving every issue. Recently, my husband and I both had some health issues we needed to deal with, so we have been on the South Beach Diet for almost a year, with great success. We were not willing to sacrifice flavor and great food for our diet, though, so I have looked for ways to adapt many of your recipes to a good-carb, good-fat diet.

One really tasty and easy way to adapt many of the main courses and reduce fat from sautéing is to grill meats instead of cooking them on the stove. Our gas grill works well for that. I miss having the great brown stuff on the bottom of the pan, but I love the lean, grilled flavor. I do this regularly for your wonderful Arroz con Pollo (*Fine Cooking* #37, p. 82), and last night did the same with the Spicy Thai Beef Curry (*Fine Cooking* #81, p. 98c).

For the Arroz con Pollo, I cook the chicken parts and sausage on the grill while I sauté the vegetables. Since I now use brown rice, I add that with some additional broth, cook it about half way, and then combine the chicken and sausage to finish cooking. For the Spicy Thai Beef Curry, I just adapted the cooking time, putting the thinly sliced steak into the sauce in the last few minutes to heat. It worked great.

—Anne Gomes, via email ♦

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Ris Lacoste ("Thanksgiving," p. 44) has cooked many spectacular Thanksgiving dinners during her 10-year tenure as executive chef of 1789 Restaurant in Washington, DC. But the ones she cherishes most are the simple, comforting Thanksgiving meals her mother cooks every year for family and friends. Ris plans to open her own bistro-style restaurant in DC next spring.

Jennifer Armentrout ("Roasting Vegetables," p. 53) is *Fine Cooking's* senior food editor and test kitchen manager. During her vegetarian days in college, when her roommates got behind on washing their dishes, and baking sheets were the only things left, Jennifer discovered the beauty of roasting vegetables: quick, easy, and delicious. She's been at it ever since and is always happy to share her tips for getting a perfect crisp-on-the-outside, tender-on-the-inside texture.

A New Yorker transplanted to North Carolina, **Karen Barker** ("Pecan Desserts," p. 58) feels drawn to her adopted region's most beloved ingredients—and that includes pecans. In this issue, she's channeled her love of these nuts into four fabulous desserts. Karen is the pastry chef and co-owner with husband Ben Barker of the Magnolia Grill restaurant in Durham. She's a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America and the author of two cookbooks, *Not Afraid of Flavor* and *Sweet Stuff: Karen Barker's American Desserts*. In 2003, she won a James Beard award for outstanding pastry chef.

Joanne Weir ("Spinach Salads," p. 64) is all about "shaking things up in the kitchen" and giving new twists to classic

dishes. She is a culinary instructor and the author of several cookbooks, including *From Tapas to Meze* and *Weir Cooking in the City*, which won a James Beard award. Joanne began her culinary career at Chez Panisse, in Berkeley, California, where she worked for five years before spending a year studying with master cooking instructor Madeleine Kamman.

Perla Meyers ("Linguine with Clam Sauce," p. 68) studied at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. She is the author of eight cookbooks and conducts cooking workshops around the country and at her home in Washington Depot, Connecticut.

After running Great Cakes Bakery in Westport, Connecticut, for five years, **Kathy Kingsley** ("Fast Cinnamon Buns," p. 70) knows the restorative powers of sweets. She studied with master chocolatiers in Switzerland to develop the recipes for her latest cookbook, *Chocolate Therapy*, which focuses on ways chocolate can lift your spirits.

Fine Cooking contributing editor **Molly Stevens** ("Bean and Vegetable Soups," p. 73) is an expert on all things slow-cooked, whether it's braises, stews, or soups. She is, after all, the author of *All About Braising*, winner of both a James Beard award and an International Association of Culinary Professionals award. Besides being a prolific food writer, cookbook author, and editor, Molly is an accomplished cooking teacher who gives classes all over the country. In 2006, she was named the IACP cooking teacher of the year. ♦



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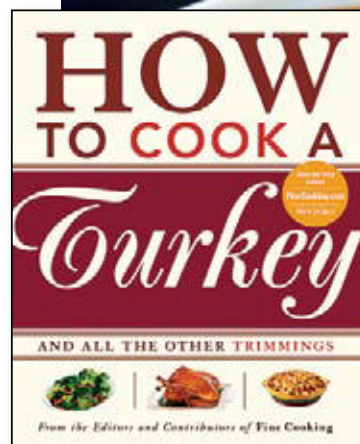


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on the front burner

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Here are some recent highlights.

Peanut butter question

CREATED BY HEATHER: I have noticed that almost all baking recipes that use peanut butter specify that results will be better with regular, not "natural," peanut butter. Is the partially hydrogenated oil necessary for good results? Trader Joe's peanut butter is organic and contains only peanuts and salt, but it doesn't separate. Will it work as well as Skippy?

Posted by CookiMonster: I often see that warning, too, but I have yet to encounter a recipe where the natural peanut butter didn't work just fine.

Posted by Meg: I've used natural peanut butter in a very simple cookie recipe, and there was a difference. The recipe calls for an egg, peanut butter, baking soda, sugar, and maybe something else. When I've made this with "regular" peanut butter, it behaved quite well. The last time I used natural peanut butter, the recipe seemed stiffer and more crumbly. It took more effort to devise a ball shape, and I had to be more careful about how hard I pressed down with the fork to make the usual surface decoration. But they tasted just fine, and once baked, most peanut butter cookies crumble, anyway. I don't know if I'd bother purchasing "regular" peanut butter just to make cookies.



Feedback on Potato, Thyme & Olive Oil Gratin, FC #74

CREATED BY JEAN: Sliced potatoes coated with olive oil, s&p, sprinkled with fresh thyme, and baked in chicken broth at 375°F, covered for 1/2 hour and then uncovered until browned and done. Easy and tasty.

I used my little Emile Henry dish that fits so nicely in my toaster oven. Easy and about as healthy as you can make a potato. Served with ham, green beans, and applesauce. I'm sure I'll do this again, probably using ham broth.

Posted by SallyBR1: Excellent! I love potato gratin but refrain from making it that often because of all the fat. This sounds like a great option; plus, I could make it in individual gratin dishes.

Posted by RisottoGirl: I really prefer the style of gratin made with stock rather than cream. It is tasty and much lighter, without trying to be light. I think it works well with a wider variety of mains, too.

I make it using a fresh bay laurel leaf when I can get it. I love potatoes with bay laurel. ♦

Raw-Milk Cheese

from Tennessee

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

“I’ve always been fascinated by milk,” says Tim Clark, a Baptist minister and co-owner of Locust Grove Farm in Knoxville, Tennessee. “It’s a living thing.” That’s why when he decided to convert his 25 acres of sheep pasture into a dairy three years ago, he knew he would make only raw-milk cheeses. “Pasteurization changes milk, including its flavor,” he says, referring to the process of heating milk to kill certain bacteria. As a result, Locust Grove Farm is the only licensed raw-milk dairy in the state.

Tim has raised sheep for more than 20 years and has always been intrigued by the process of turning milk into cheese. But when he started farming, no one was making cheese in the Southeast, so he turned to articles and books for cheesemaking information. Then he got a hands-on crash course working on a dairy farm in Scotland with master cheesemaker Allan Brown. When he returned home, he had everything he needed to start out on his own.

With the help of business partner Sheri Palko and his wife, Brenda, Tim makes four distinctive sheep’s milk cheeses: Galloway, a mild, nutty semi-hard farmhouse cheddar made by a process he learned in Scotland; Appalachian Spring, a delightfully tangy Gouda-style cheese with a faintly sweet finish; the subtly sharp, creamy La Mancha, Locust Grove’s interpretation of Spain’s manchego; and Cumberland, a semi-hard cheese spiced with green peppercorns, red chiles, onion, garlic, and ginger.

All the cheeses are made by hand with the farm’s own sheep’s milk and nothing else but cultures, vegetable rennet, and salt. Tim and Sheri are firm believers in old-time, sustainable farming practices: Their free-range sheep are on grass year-round and are never given any processed feeds, hormones, or antibiotics. For more information, visit LocustGroveFarm.net; to order, call 865-567-5213. ♦

Clockwise from the top: Cumberland, Galloway, Appalachian Spring, La Mancha

To make his Galloway cheese, Tim Clark puts the milk in a large vat and slowly raises the temperature to about 87°F. Then he adds natural bacterial cultures along with rennet, which causes the curds to separate from the whey. He cuts the curds using a custom-made knife (right).



After the whey is drained, the curds are pushed to the sides of the vat, forming a mass. The Galloway then undergoes a “cheddaring” process, in which Tim cuts the curds into large slabs (left) and then stacks and restacks the slabs until most of the whey is drawn out. He cuts the slabs into small pieces (bottom left), adds organic sea salt, and presses them



into molds by hand (bottom right). Then, using a manual press, he squeezes out all the liquid.

The cheese is moved to a temperature- and humidity-controlled ripening room, where it ages for a minimum of 60 days (required by law for all raw-milk cheeses).



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If you've ever admired fancy restaurant desserts adorned with touches of shiny gold, you'll know why we're excited to use this edible gold and silver in our own kitchens. Get creative: Try sprinkling some of the "petals" on hot chocolate or chocolate-covered strawberries. Use the powder to rim champagne or martini glasses or to dust chocolate truffles. And if you really have the Midas touch, experiment with the gold and silver leaves, which let you gild just about any food. *Edible gold and silver powder, petals, and leaves, \$21 to \$100, at SurLaTable.com (800-243-0852). For information and a list of other retailers, visit EasyLeafProducts.com.*

Sweeten the Deal

To give your desserts that "wow" factor, look to any one of these easy embellishments

BY REBECCA FREEDMAN



Baubles add a little drama

If you were thinking about using sprinkles or dragées to decorate your next home-made dessert, stop right there. We've found something even more dramatic: These shiny and colorful chocolate "pearls" (about a quarter-inch in diameter) are perfect for cake decorating. They're also available in white chocolate, coated in red. *Michel Cluizel chocolate pearls, \$15 per tube; to order, call 212-477-7335.*



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We think candied rose, lilac, and violet petals make a cute—and tasty—addition to individual cakes or cupcakes. Try pairing them with some candied mint leaves for a little extra flavor and decoration. *Candied flower petals and mint leaves, \$8 per 2-ounce package, MarketHallFoods.com (888-952-4005).* ♦

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Is there a secret to keeping my pumpkin pie filling from separating from the crust?

—Gloria Betz, via email

A Carole Walter responds: A custard pie filling separates from the crust because of shrinkage, which is a normal part of the cooling process. The fact is, all baked goods shrink as they cool due to the evaporation of moisture during baking; with a pie, the filling and crust are shrinking in opposite directions, which often results in separation. There are ways to reduce the chance of this happening, though. One is to avoid extreme changes in temperature; choose a spot to cool your pie that is free of drafts, and do not put the pie in the refrigerator until it has cooled completely. I prefer serving a pie the day it is made so that it doesn't need to go into the fridge. Also, I always prebake the pastry crust for pumpkin and other custard pies to give the crust a chance to shrink before the filling is added. Even though the filling will still shrink upon cooling, separation will be minimized.

If you must bake a pumpkin pie a day ahead, your best bet may be to disguise any separation. I like to sprinkle chopped toasted pecans or almonds around the edge of the filling before serving. I've also used crushed gingersnaps or biscotti. If you like, you could pipe whipped cream decoratively around the edge. Realize that the separation may be unavoidable, and that one bite of a homemade pumpkin pie will take everyone's mind off how it looks.

Carole Walter is a baking instructor and the author of several cookbooks, including Great Pies & Tarts.

When baking bread and other pastries, some recipes call for an egg wash, others for brushing the top with milk. Are they interchangeable?

—April Finnegan,
New York, New York

A Nicole Rees responds: Brushing with an egg wash gives a different effect than using milk, so they are not interchangeable. Pastry chefs use an egg wash primarily for shine, though the egg yolk will contribute a golden color to the finished baked product. For a clear shine, an egg white alone can be used. Milk, on the other hand,

is used to encourage browning. For example, scones and biscuits will be pale on top (even though the bottom side is brown) if not brushed with milk or cream before baking.

Dairy products contain both amino acids and certain types of sugars that react with one another in the high heat of the oven and undergo what is called the Maillard, or browning, reaction. This process creates the appetizing golden color we see, but more important, it develops the savory flavor of browned foods.

Nicole Rees is a food scientist who co-wrote the revised edition of Understanding Baking and its companion recipe book, The Baker's Manual.

What is the difference between cultured and old-fashioned buttermilk?

—Maria Presley,
Durham, Connecticut

A Cary Frye responds: What we call old-fashioned, or churned, buttermilk is very different from cultured buttermilk. It is the thin, slightly acidic liquid left over after churning butter from full-cream milk. It is drunk or used in soups and sauces in northern Europe and South Asia but is not available commercially in the United States.

The buttermilk sold in supermarkets here is cultured, created by fermenting pasteurized low-fat or nonfat milk so the milk sugars turn into lactic acid. It is thick and tart, a result of its increased acidity, which keeps the milk protein casein from being soluble and results in clabbering or curdling. (That is why you can make a stand-in for buttermilk by adding a tablespoon of lemon juice or white vinegar to a cup of milk, increasing the acidity and curdling the milk.)

Old-fashioned and cultured buttermilk cannot be used interchangeably. Cultured buttermilk is used in pancakes, scones, biscuits, and other baked products because of the tangy flavor and tender texture it imparts.

Cary Frye is vice president for regulatory affairs for the International Dairy Foods Association. ♦

Have a question of general interest about cooking? Send it to Q&A, Fine Cooking, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fcqa@taunton.com, and we'll find a cooking professional with the answer.

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Fall for Sage

BY RUTH LIVELY

It's hard to believe there was a time when the idea of cooking with sage would never have crossed my mind. I loved it as a beautiful plant in my garden, but its strong herbal aroma kept me from using it in the kitchen. Until one day, after realizing I'd run out of rosemary and thyme, I tried adding a few fresh sage leaves to a batch of potatoes I was roasting. To my delight, they made a favorite recipe even better. Cooking, it turns out, mellows sage's potent aroma and flavor to a very appealing level. Pretty soon, my one big plant wasn't enough to keep up with my ever-growing demand for this delightfully hearty, wintry herb.

Fresh is best

Although sage is available both fresh and dried, I recommend using fresh. Dried sage has a stronger, more concentrated flavor that can sometimes be bitter. If you're flavoring a soup, a stew, or a pot of beans, or if you're making a rub, dried sage, either ground or crumbled, is a decent substitute for fresh. But if you really want the sage flavor to shine, you have to use fresh leaves. Fortunately, sage plants are tough enough to withstand light frosts, so sage is available much of the year.

When looking for things to pair with sage, think rich, starchy, and sweet. It's fabulous with pork (see my recipe on p. 26); it boosts the flavor of potatoes, beans, grains, and breads (think stuffing); and it provides a good counterpoint to the sweet starchiness of winter squash, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin. It's also delicious with apples and pears.

(continued on p. 26)

From garden to kitchen

Sage plants need lots of sunshine and do best in gritty, well-drained, not-too-fertile soil. Harvest individual leaves or sprigs several inches long. Rinse them to remove dust and gently blot them dry with a kitchen towel. Whether you grow your own or buy it at the store, keep sage as dry as possible, as moisture will cause it to deteriorate quickly. The best way to store it is in the refrigerator inside a sealed plastic bag lined with a paper towel. It'll keep for two or three days.

All the pretty sages

At the market, you'll typically find only standard culinary sage (*Salvia officinalis*), which has gray-green leaves with a pebbled, slightly fuzzy texture. But at herb nurseries (See Where to Buy It, p. 92), you'll find many more sage types to grow and cook with. They have similar flavors, but they vary in shape and color. Be aware that there are some types of sage that aren't edible; so for kitchen use, make sure you buy one that is (all *Salvia officinalis* varieties are edible). Here are some of my favorites:

Berggarten is a nonflowering sage, so the plant's energy is devoted to producing lots of aromatic leaves.

Holt's Mammoth has leaves twice the size of regular sage.

Woodcote Farm has large leaves and is resistant to powdery mildew (a problem with sage in humid climates).

Variegated sages are as beautiful as they are tasty. Golden sage (far left, center) has bright-green leaves edged in creamy yellow; purple sage (lower left) has dusky purple leaves; and tricolor sage (upper left) has leaves splashed with green, purple, and beige.



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Pork Tenderloin with Sage & Marsala Sauce

Serves four.

I like to serve this dish with garlic mashed potatoes, braised vegetables, or just a fresh green salad.

- 1 large pork tenderloin (1¼ to 1½ lb.), trimmed and cut in half crosswise**
- ½ tsp. kosher salt**
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 tsp. pink peppercorns, crushed (optional)**
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- ½ cup sweet Marsala**
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh sage leaves**
- Fried sage leaves (see below), for garnish (optional)**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

Season the pork tenderloin with the salt and pepper and rub it evenly with the pink peppercorns, if using.

Heat 1 Tbs. of the butter and the oil in a 10-inch ovenproof skillet or straight-sided sauté pan

over medium-high heat. Put the pork in the pan and sear it until golden brown on all sides, about 5 minutes total. Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the meat registers 140°F, 10 to 15 minutes. Move the pork to a cutting board and tent loosely with foil.

Pour off and discard most of the fat left in the skillet. Set the skillet over medium-high heat and add the Marsala. Bring to a vigorous simmer, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits. Simmer until reduced by half, about 2 minutes. Off the heat, add the remaining 1 Tbs. butter and the chopped sage. Swirl or stir the sauce until the butter melts.

Slice the pork into 12 pieces, arrange them on a platter, and pour the hot pan sauce over the meat. Garnish with the fried sage leaves, if using.

Fried sage: garnish or snack

Fried sage makes an unusual crisp garnish for roasted meats and poultry, mashed potatoes, and even risotto. Or it can be a treat all on its own to enjoy with other nibbles like olives, toasted nuts, and cheese. And it takes only a few minutes to cook.

Always start with clean and dry whole leaves—the bigger the better—with stems left on. Pour enough olive oil in a heavy skillet to cover the bottom by about ⅛ inch and heat over medium heat until the oil shimmers. Add sage leaves in a single layer and fry until brittle but still a bright green color with no browning, 15 to 30 seconds. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels and sprinkle with salt.



Sage ideas

Here are more delicious ways to add sage to your everyday cooking.

Roast baby potato halves on a bed of sage in a roasting pan covered with a thin layer of olive oil.

Dress up Tuscan-style beans. Simmer cannellini beans with lots of chopped fresh sage, garlic, and pepper. Dress the cooked beans while still hot with a vinaigrette of olive oil, red-wine vinegar, chopped fresh sage, and garlic.

Whip up a quick and tasty pasta sauce. Caramelize onion slices in olive oil and add chopped sage and walnut pieces during the last 10 minutes of cooking. Season and toss with hot pasta and crumbled gorgonzola.

Make a sumptuous squash soup. Sauté cubes of acorn squash with chopped onion, sage, and garlic and then simmer in chicken or vegetable broth until tender. Purée, season, and add a little cream, if you like.

Make a rich gnocchi sauce. Toss cooked and drained gnocchi in a pan of browned butter and whole sage leaves and season well.

Cook up juicy saltimbocca. Lay a thin slice of prosciutto and a large sage leaf on a pounded veal cutlet; roll up and secure with a toothpick. Season the rolls and brown them in butter. Then make a sauce by deglazing the pan with sweet Marsala.

Ruth Lively cooks, writes, and gardens in New Haven, Connecticut. ♦



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what's new

From pro kitchens to yours

Here are two new ideas for your home, copied from restaurant kitchens. Both come from American Range, a company that has just started selling to the residential market after making commercial ranges for 30 years. The range and oven come in 10 colors, and you can find a list of distributors at AmericanRange.com.

Step up to a new range

With its back burners 5 inches higher than the front ones, this range offers easier access to sauté pans and small saucepans in the rear. The Step-Up residential range is available in 24- and 30-inch styles with four burners and 36- and 48-inch styles with six burners (shown). The gas range incorporates several professional-grade features, such as a 15,500-BTU infrared broiler burner, a 5.6-cubic-foot oven cavity that uses dual convection motors, and sealed burners. Prices range from \$3,450 for the 24-inch to \$6,500 for the 48-inch model.



Easy-open oven

Here's a space-saving alternative to the traditional downward-opening oven door: a French-door wall oven. The two doors open dependently; that is, pulling on one handle opens them both. So instead of hovering over a hot open door and reaching in to baste a turkey or check doneness on a cake, you can step closer to your food and not strain your back. The doors extend just over 15 inches when opened, compared to more than 20 inches for traditional ovens, making these a nice solution for tiny apartments or kitchens with nearby islands or tables. At nearly 30 inches wide, the oven has a cavity of 4.7 cubic feet and sells for about \$3,000.

Restaurant-style range & oven	28
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BY LISA WADDLE

A ladle that's got it all

For dishing up stews or soups like those in our hearty bean and vegetable soup story on p. 73, a good ladle is a big help. But ladles are not all alike.

This stainless-steel version from Fissler, a company that's been making and selling kitchen tools in Europe for more than 150 years, has just been introduced in the United States. It has a comfortable, nubbed handle and a handy hook for hanging, and at nearly 11 inches long, it can dip into a deep stock pot. The bowl itself is deep enough that it's not apt to let bulky stew ingredients slip out. Some ladles have a molded lip on the side, but these can complicate pouring, forcing you to turn your wrist awkwardly to serve. The Fissler has a rimmed edge all around that prevents most drips when pouring.

You can buy the Fissler Magic Line ladle for \$24 at Amazon.com.



tool vs. tool

Potato ricer vs. masher

Mashed potatoes are as essential as turkey to most Thanksgiving tables. What's the best way to deliver that smooth texture everyone loves? To find out, I put the two most commonly used tools, a ricer and a masher, to the test:

Ricer

This extrusion tool forces cooked potato through small holes, resulting in rice-like pieces of potato (hence the name). It's constructed of a hopper into which you put a cooked (peeled or not) potato and a plunger that forces the potato through the holes. Because air is incorporated into the potato as it's pressed, this tool gives you the lightest mashed potatoes possible. A ricer guarantees no lumps, and your potatoes will be very smooth. The only downside is that it can be a bit time-consuming, especially if you're using unpeeled potatoes, as the skins must be removed from the hopper after each pressing; otherwise, they clog the holes.



Masher

Hand mashers get a bad rap for leaving lumps, but I found that they can, in fact, deliver smooth, creamy potatoes. You just have to be methodical with your mashing method, getting into every corner of the pot and using a press and twist motion with the masher, adding a little liquid at a time if you must. (Be sure your potatoes are thoroughly cooked, too.) If you like the skins in your finished dish (for nutrition and texture), a masher or metal spoon is the only way to go. Don't expect mashers to deliver light or fluffy potatoes, though.



Bottom line: Which tool you use depends on your definition of ideal mashed potatoes. If you're after a bowl of textured spuds, especially good when adding extras like herbs or cheese, a masher should be your choice. If fluffy and smooth is your idea of potato nirvana, go with a ricer. Either way, be sure to buy a durable model that feels good in your hand. When you have a pile of potatoes to work through, you don't want a flimsy tool that's going to cause a hand cramp.

Pictured: RSVP Endurance jumbo potato ricer, \$30 from ChefTools.com. Danesco double-action stainless potato masher, \$6 from TableTools.com.

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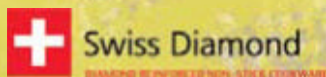
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My First Family Thanksgiving Dinner
by Susie Middleton, Editor of *Fine Cooking*

Crazy. That's what I must have been. Fresh out of culinary school and newly married in 1992, I had the nerve to invite both my parents and my in-laws to the first Thanksgiving at my house. And of course I wanted to impress them all.

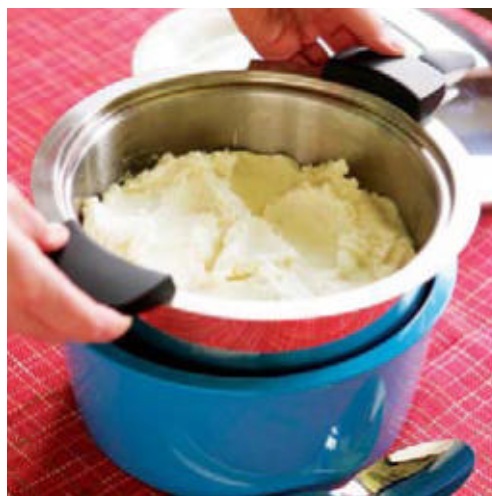
For the rest of Susie's story visit our Web site, and to enter our Sweeps, go to FineCooking.com/Sweepstakes



Smart Solutions for Easier Holiday Cooking

Keeping it hot

Here's a great pan for entertaining or for families who eat at different times. The Kuhn Rikon Hotpan is a stainless-steel pot with a lid that fits into a bright melamine bowl that doubles as an insulating jacket. I tried it during a dinner party and not only did it keep mashed potatoes nicely warm on the countertop for two hours, but it also freed up a burner. (And a bonus: the bowl looked good enough to serve from.) It also kept a couscous dish toasty during transport to a potluck, and the bowl served as a stay-cool shell for the pan, so I didn't need potholders or a trivet. The 18/10 stainless-steel pan has heat-resistant handles and comes in five sizes: 1 quart, 2 quart, 3 quart, 5 quart, and a 4½-quart braizer. The bowl can also be used on its own. Prices range from \$100 to \$200 at Amazon.com.



This stainless-steel pot nests in an insulating melamine bowl that makes it pretty enough to bring to the table while also keeping the food warm.

More room to cook

Whether you're looking to ease the stovetop crunch during Thanksgiving or need a way to keep dishes warm on a buffet, an extra burner can be a smart investment. Though the standard electric hotplate we used in college is still

around, technology has advanced a bit. I put three differently fueled portable burners through their paces, assessing both their capacity to cook and to maintain steady low temperatures.

Viking portable induction cooker

Price: \$500 at ChefsResource.com



This impressive induction burner with its glass-ceramic surface and stainless-steel frame allows you to adjust heat instantly and with great precision. The lowest setting is below a simmer, while "high" delivers the equivalent of 15,000 BTUs and boiled 4 cups of water in less than four minutes. Safety features include a knob that must be pushed to be turned, an automatic shut-off one minute after a pan is removed, and the fact that it won't heat up at all unless compatible cookware is used on it. It accommodates pots and pans up to 12 inches in diameter.

Deni halogen burner

Price: \$150 at Deni.com



Slimmer and lighter than the Viking induction cooker, this burner is powered by quartz glass tubes filled with halogen gas, below a glass-ceramic cooktop. It plugs in and heats up instantly with the push of a button and cools down quickly. It boiled 4 cups of water in six minutes, and its lowest setting is below a simmer. Safety features include a light that blinks as long as the burner remains hot, even if the unit has been turned off. The cooking surface is 9½ inches in diameter, but it can accommodate pots and pans up to 12 inches.

Bonjour buffet tabletop burner

Price: \$50 at BonjourProducts.com



Consisting of a lightweight chrome stand and a butane-powered gas burner, this is the most portable of the three burners. It also took the longest to boil water, most likely because the gas jet is rather small in diameter. The gas could easily be set low enough to hold a simmer. Once the butane tank is filled, it burns for up to three hours and unlike the other two reviewed, it does not require a plug or cord. It can accommodate pots up to 12 inches in diameter. The chrome stand does become quite hot, and the open flame is a potential safety hazard.

what to look for

A lightweight stir-fry pan

In many of our stir-fry recipes (such as those in Quick & Delicious, p. 98a), we call for a 12-inch skillet or a stir-fry pan. Why not a traditional wok? Well, a classic round-bottom wok is designed to sit directly in the cooking flames. When that style is used on a western stovetop, with a ring, the result is largely unsatisfactory for stir-frying—only the very bottom of the pan gets hot enough. If your stove is one of the few with a special high-powered wok burner, then by all means use it with a traditional wok for stir-fry recipes. For the rest of us, a stir-fry pan is a better solution. Here's what to look for:



Sloped sides 3 to 4 inches high, for easy tossing

Instead of a heavy-gauge—and expensive—pan, look for a mid-range one that's light enough to pick up easily, even when full of food.

Pictured: The Circulon Total open stir-fry pan, \$40 at Amazon.com.

test drive

Making soy milk at home



I'm a big fan of soy milk for both drinking and baking but have always balked at paying close to \$3 for a quart of the commercially available brands. Making my own seemed too much of a production, until I tried the Soyabella soymilk maker by Tribest. Using it is easy: You just plug in the machine, pour soybeans (from a can or dried beans soaked overnight) into the mesh basket, screw on the top, and push a button. In 15 minutes the machine grinds the beans (rather loudly) and heats the water, producing 1 quart of hot soymilk.

I like to substitute soy milk directly for cow's milk in baking recipes such

as banana bread and pancakes, but I also drink it straight, with just a pinch of salt. The Soyabella also makes raw nut or rice milk.

The goof-proof elements are part of what makes this appliance a winner: no exposed heating coil and sensors that shut the unit off if there's too much or not enough water added. It even comes with a cleaning brush and scouring pad, making it simple to keep the stainless-steel cooking chamber and mesh basket clean. And it ends up costing less than 50 cents for a quart of fresh soymilk. The Soyabella sells for \$100 at EverythingKitchens.com.

review

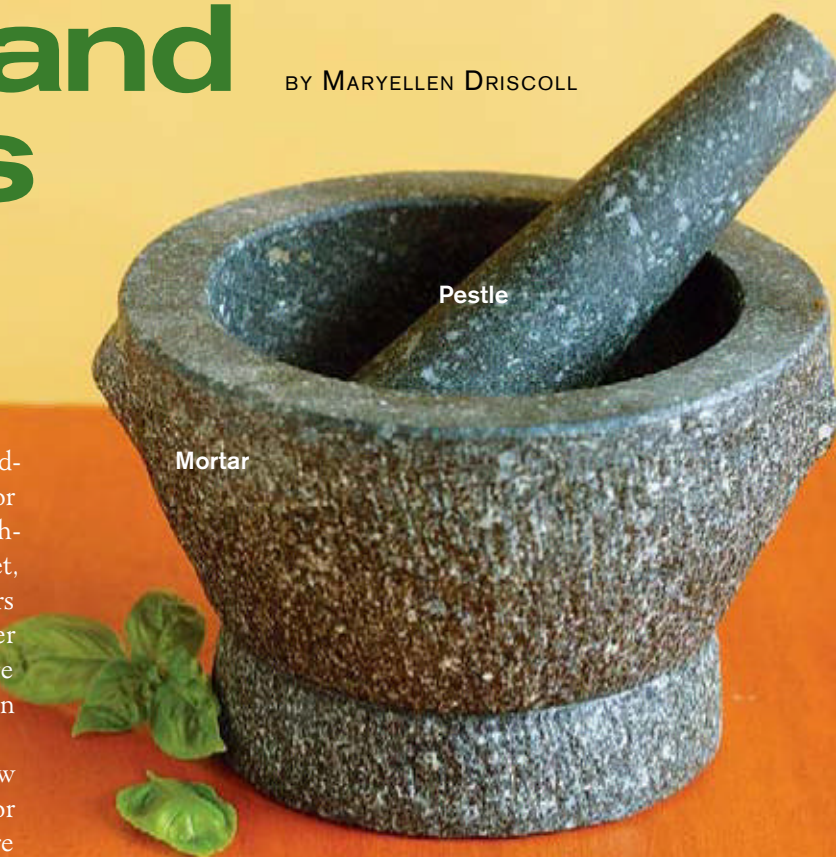
Mortars and Pestles

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

Consider material and size when shopping for one of these versatile tools

The mortar and pestle are ancient tools that no modern kitchen should be without. They're handy for everything from cracking peppercorns and crushing tender herbs to making pesto and guacamole. Yet, these days, electric spice grinders and food processors often take their place, and that's a pity, because after testing an assortment of mortars and pestles, we're convinced that a good set can perform as well—or even better—at many tasks.

Of the 18 mortars and pestles we tested (see “How we tested,” at right), many models frustrated us or proved to be of limited use, but a few workhorses were delightfully versatile and excelled at every task we threw at them, including crushing garlic, spices, and nuts.



Our favorite

What to look for

In performing our tests, we discovered that material, shape, and size are the key characteristics to look at when shopping for a mortar and pestle.

The ideal material for a mortar and pestle is something hefty and very hard. It shouldn't be so rough as to be porous or difficult to clean, nor should it be so smooth as to be slippery.

The Thai granite model above embodied our ideal: Literally rock hard, its matte surface created friction for grinding but was smooth enough to wipe clean easily, and its heft made crushing a breeze. Several other stone models were also very effective. However, an Italian marble mortar paired with a light, relatively soft wood pestle failed to impress because the pestle required us to work harder to achieve good results, and it couldn't grind cumin seed.

In fact, all the wood mortars and pestles we tried seemed too light and soft to be

effective at all the tasks we wanted them to do. Other materials, too, had shortcomings: With porcelain, breaking was a concern (one model we tested broke on the first use). And slick surfaces like stainless steel let ingredients slip around too much.

The best mortars have a deeply rounded shape that keeps ingredients from jumping or spilling out. Wider, shallow shapes don't contain ingredients as well. A stable base is also important. When it comes to pestles, many are too narrow and rounded, so ingredients readily pop out from under them. A broader, more gently rounded base works far better.

As for size, think big rather than small.

If you're looking to buy just a single mortar and pestle, a capacious mortar can mash small quantities just as well as large. But a too-small mortar is, ultimately, of limited use and lets ingredients pop out (the low-profile model at far right, however, innovatively solves this problem).

Thai granite mortar and pestle

**\$30.95 at ImportFood.com
7-inch diameter;
2-cup capacity**

This solid, hand-carved mortar and pestle excels at the full range of tasks, from mashing delicate herbs to grinding stubborn peppercorns. The heavy, broad-based pestle needs to do little more than fall on ingredients to crush them—very little elbow grease required. And the bowl's deeply sloped shape and matte texture keep ingredients in the center, so there's no need to chase them around with the pestle. At 12 pounds, this mortar won't scoot around during use, but we suggest putting a cloth beneath it to protect your counter. Also comes in 6-, 8-, and 9-inch sizes.



Other good choices (listed in order of capacity)

Mexican molcajete y tejolote poblano

\$36.95 at GourmetSleuth.com
7½- to 8-inch diameter;
3-cup capacity

Traditionally for making salsa, mole, and guacamole, good *molcajetes* (mortars) and *tejolotes* (pestles) are made from basalt (volcanic rock). *Molcajetes* vary widely in quality—some aren't even pure basalt—so purchase with care. Of the two we tried, we prefer this one's smoother surface and deeper, more rounded bowl. The cleaning brush that was included helps get the textured surface clean. We recommend putting a towel underneath for stability and to protect your counter.

Cast-iron mortar and pestle by Typhoon

\$30 at Typhoonus.com
6-inch diameter;
2-cup capacity

Its hard surface, the pestle's heft, and the bowl's depth give this model many of the advantages of the Thai granite model. The pour spout is a nice feature. But it has weaknesses, too: You need to hold the mortar steady when pressing or pounding the pestle any way but straight down. Also, the cast iron will react with acidic ingredients, and to avoid rust, it needs to be washed and dried promptly after use and regularly seasoned with oil.

Pedestal-style mortar and pestle by Fox Run

\$14.95 at Lehmanns.com
4-inch diameter;
⅓-cup capacity

This is a common style, but we like this particular model because the pestle is wider than the others we tried. If you're strictly looking for a small model for little jobs, this is an inexpensive, effective option. Though small, the deep bowl prevents most pop-outs, but jumpy ingredients like peppercorns need to be crushed with caution.

Low-profile mortar and pestle

\$16.95 at LeeValley.com
4-inch diameter

This unusual mortar and pestle is nice for crushing small amounts of hard whole spices or garlic. The pestle fits snugly into the contour of the mortar, so you don't have to chase spices around inside—or outside—the mortar. It can handle no more than a couple of teaspoons or so of spices or a clove of garlic, and no liquids.

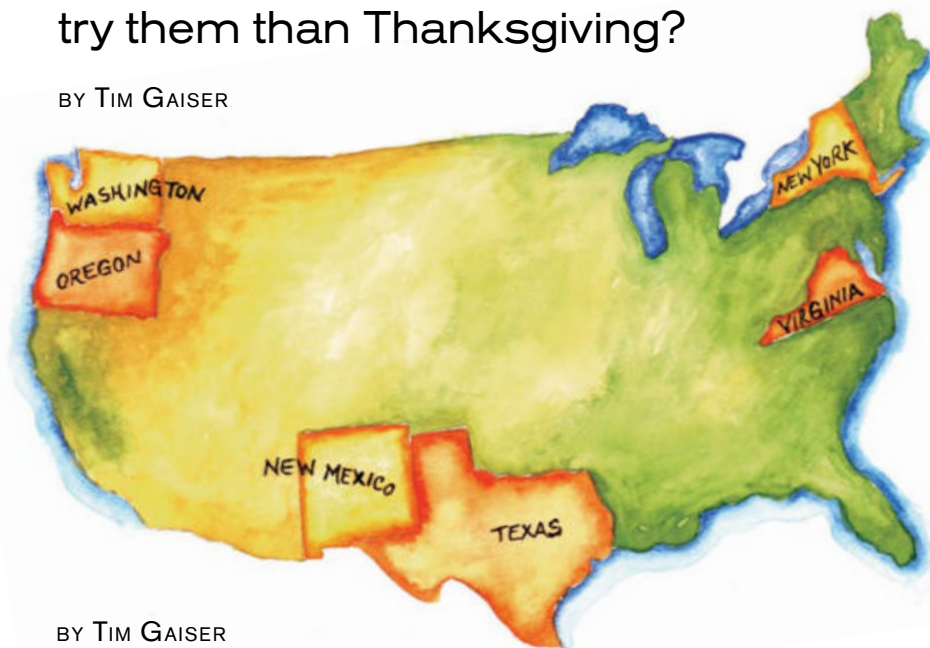
HOW WE TESTED We tried 18 mortars and pestles made from ceramic, porcelain, different kinds of stone, and wood. They ranged in size, capacity, and shape. To assess them, we mashed cloves of garlic, slices of ginger, peppercorns, cumin seed, cilantro, and pine nuts, and made a curry paste.

Maryellen Driscoll is an editor at large for Fine Cooking. ♦

All-American Wines

Many states besides California produce great-quality wines—what better time to try them than Thanksgiving?

BY TIM GAISER



BY TIM GAISER

In the not-so-distant past, when you mentioned American wine, people automatically thought of California. But this is no longer the case. Though California wine still gets the lion's share of press and accolades, you can now find wineries in every state. The range of wines produced is incredibly diverse, and the quality keeps improving. So this Thanksgiving, look no further than our fifty states for your wine selections.

To get you started and help you sort through regions, styles, and varietals, I picked a handful of delicious and perfectly affordable wines from six American wine-producing states. With their moderate alcohol content and restrained oak and tannins, they're all great choices for the big turkey dinner. (To find sources, see p. 92).

What is an appellation?

An appellation is a defined winegrowing and winemaking region, and there are three types in the United States: state, county, and American Viticulture Areas (AVA). An AVA can be as small as Cole Valley in California, with just over 150 acres, or as large as the Ohio River Valley, which spans six states and covers more than 200,000 square miles. Unlike European appellations, which specify the grape varieties grown along with grape-growing and winemaking practices, AVAs define only the geographical boundaries of an American wine region.

Oregon



Oregon's wine industry dates back to the mid 1970s when David Lett, of the famed Eyrie Vineyards, left California in search of affordable land to start a new winery. He found a home for his Pinot Noir grapes in the Willamette Valley, south of Portland, establishing one of the state's first wineries. In time, Oregon built its reputation on world-class Pinot Noir, but its Pinot Gris is also among the best anywhere. Other wines to look for are Chardonnay, Riesling, and Pinot Blanc for whites, and Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Shiraz for reds.

Key appellations

Oregon (state)
Willamette Valley (AVA)
Umpqua Valley (AVA)
Rogue Valley (AVA)

Wines to try

White:

2006 Adelsheim Pinot Gris, Willamette Valley, \$18

What it's like: Crisp and tart with luscious ripe red-apple flavor and notes of green melon and lemon.

Great with: Roasted turkey and chicken, carrots, and sweet potatoes.

Red:

2005 Chehalem "3 Vineyard" Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, \$22

What it's like: Rich and supple with tart berry flavors and a touch of toasty oak.

Great with: Mashed potatoes, rich gratins, and hearty braises.

(continued on p. 38)



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Washington



Established only in the 1980s, Washington's wine industry is even younger than Oregon's, but it has quickly come a long way. The arid plain of eastern Washington has proven to be one of the best places in the country for Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Bordeaux blends, and its Syrah and Cabernet Franc are excellent as well. Outstanding Chardonnay, Riesling, and Chenin Blanc are also made in cooler-climate areas.

Key appellations

Washington (state)
Columbia Valley (AVA)
Yakima Valley (AVA)
Walla Walla Valley (AVA)
Red Mountain (AVA)
Wahluke Slope (AVA)

Wines to try

White:

2006 Bookwalter Riesling, Columbia Valley, \$16.50

What it's like: Crisp white peach and lemon-lime with floral notes.

Great with: Turkey and cranberry sauce as well as spicy dishes and bright ones like seared fish fillets with herb butter.

Red:

2004 Columbia Crest Merlot Grand Estates, Columbia Valley, \$12

What it's like: Supple black cherry and plum fruit with notes of green herb.

Great with: All the elements of the traditional Thanksgiving dinner as well as braised veal and pork.

New York



Some of the country's oldest wineries are in the Finger Lakes region, including Dr. Konstantin Frank's, the first in the U.S. to successfully grow high-quality wine grapes in a cold climate. In the last 20 years, Long Island, whose climate is reminiscent of that of France's Bordeaux region, has also become a thriving wine region. Both areas are home to boutique wineries that make everything from Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, and Viognier for whites, to Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon for reds.

Key appellations

New York (state)
Finger Lakes (AVA)
Long Island (AVA)
North Fork of Long Island (AVA)
Hamptons Long Island (AVA)

Wines to try

White:

2006 Dr. Konstantin Frank Dry Riesling, Finger Lakes, \$18

What it's like: Ripe apricot and nectarine fruit with hints of lime zest.

Great with: Roasted chicken or turkey with cranberry sauce but also tandoori chicken with ginger and lime and other Indian dishes.

Red:

2004 Palmer Vineyards Cabernet Franc Proprietor's Reserve, North Fork of Long Island, \$19

What it's like: Tart cherry and red raspberry flavor with green herb and tobacco notes.

Great with: All the elements of the traditional Thanksgiving dinner, plus pasta with lamb-sausage ragù or mustard-crusted roasted chicken.

Virginia



Virginia's warm, humid climate has traditionally made it challenging to grow grapes for high-quality wines. But outstanding wines are now being made throughout the state, thanks to technology in the form of better rot prevention and control and different clones and rootstocks that are more suited to the climate. There are now more than 100 wineries in Virginia producing a variety of wines, from Pinot Grigio, Viognier, and Chardonnay to Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and even Nebbiolo.

Key appellations

Virginia (state)
Monticello (AVA)
Shenandoah Valley (AVA)
Eastern Shore (AVA)

Wines to try

White:

2005 Blenheim Farm Viognier, Virginia, \$20

What it's like: Bright peach and nectarine notes with a spicy, tart finish.

Great with: Roasted turkey and chicken or seared fish.

Red:

2003 Barboursville Nebbiolo Reserve, Virginia, \$32

What it's like: Dried cherry notes with floral, truffle, and spice finishes.

Great with: All the elements of the Thanksgiving dinner as well as slow-roasted meats and hearty braises.

(continued on p. 40)



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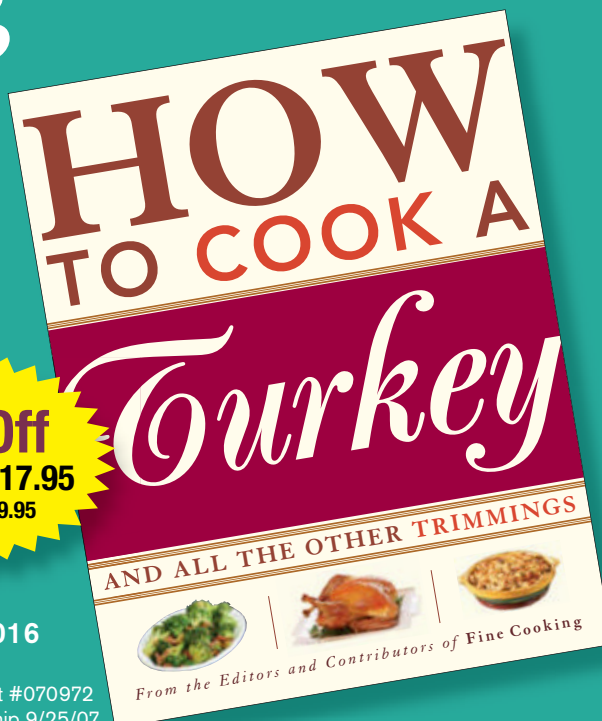
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enjoying wine



Texas

Wines to try

White:

2005 Flat Creek Estate Moscato Blanco, Texas Hill Country, \$18

What it's like: Moderately sweet with strawberry and peach flavors and spice and floral notes.

Great with: Apple and pumpkin pies.

Red:

2003 Texas Hills Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Newsome Vineyard, High Plains, \$19

What it's like: Black cherry and cassis with green herb, bittersweet chocolate, and oak notes.

Great with: The richer dishes of the holiday meal, but also pork and beef roasts.

As with Virginia, early efforts to establish vineyards in Texas were unsuccessful due to the hot, humid climate. But with new technology, growers in this state now produce an impressive range of wines from grapes as popular as Chardonnay and Merlot or as unusual as Viognier and Muscat. Reds include Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc.

Key appellations

Texas (state)
Texas High (AVA)
Texas Hill Country (AVA)
Fredericksburg in the
Texas Hill Country (AVA)

New Mexico

The warm summer days and cool nights along the Rio Grande Valley provide the right climatic conditions for a large number of grapes, from Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, and Muscat to Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Zinfandel. New Mexico also produces outstanding sparkling wines that are widely distributed.

Key appellations

New Mexico (state)
Rio Grande Valley (AVA)
Middle Rio Grande Valley (AVA)

Wines to try

White (sparkling):

NV Gruet Brut, New Mexico, \$13.50

What it's like: Bright citrus with apple notes.

Great with: Oysters and shellfish or on its own as an aperitif.



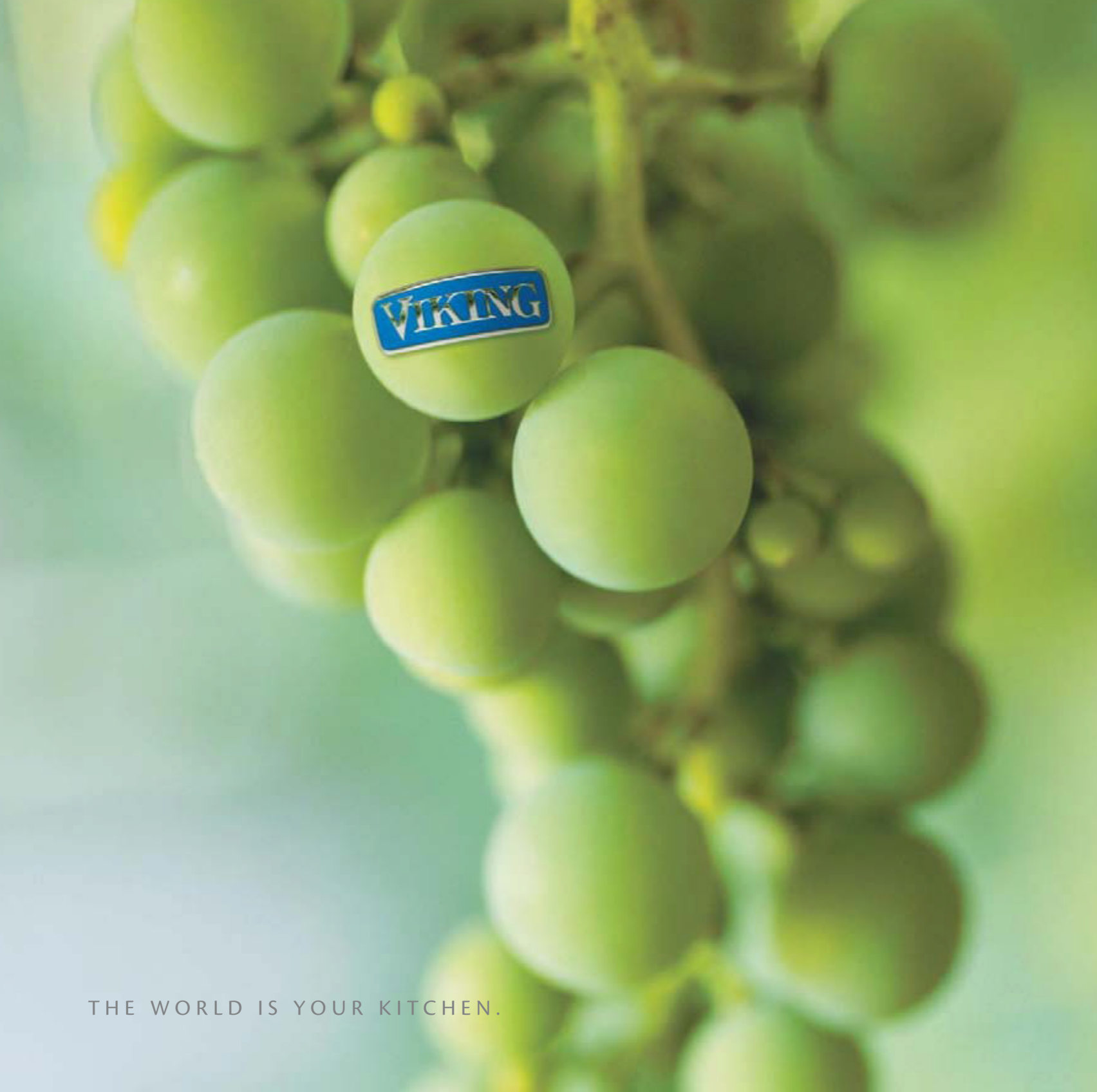
Red:

2004 Casa Rondeña Winery Cabernet Franc, New Mexico, \$20

What it's like: Ripe black fruit with notes of baking spices and herbs.

Great with: Anything hearty and rich, from turkey, stuffing, and gravy to roasted rack of lamb.

Contributing editor Tim Gaiser is a master sommelier and wine educator. ♦



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THE  LIFE
FOOD TRAVEL WINE



Winning tip

Prevent soggy tart shells

It isn't always possible to fill fruit tarts just before serving, and I used to be disappointed at how soggy the tart shell would get. I discovered that a thin layer of chocolate between the shell and the filling solves the problem. After baking and cooling the tart shell, I use a pastry brush to paint the inside of the shell with dark, milk, or white chocolate. Once the chocolate hardens, I add the pastry cream or other filling and then decorate it with the fruit. The chocolate acts as a barrier, preventing the cream from penetrating the crust, and adds a chocolate flavor.

—Mary Bendayan, North Woodmere, New York

A prize for the best tip

We want your best tips. We'll pay for the ones we publish, and we'll give a prize to the cleverest tip in each issue. Write to Tips, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506 or email fc tips@taunton.com.

The prize for this issue's winner: a set of three knives from Ergo Chef: a 9-inch offset multipurpose knife, an 8-inch chef's knife, and 6-inch chef's knife with hollow-ground edge.

Retail value is \$233.



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No-mess butter pats

Rubbing butter under the skin of a chicken or turkey used to leave me with slick, greasy hands, and I'd get butter everywhere. A better way is to work with frozen butter, and here's how I do it: I slice the butter with an egg slicer to get even pieces, then separate the slices and put them in a plastic bag in the freezer. The frozen pats slip easily under the poultry skin.

—K.L. Wyrill,
San Diego, California

Preventing rust in baking pans

A source of frustration for me is finding spots of rust in my baking pans, even after carefully washing and drying them. I have found a good way to prevent this. Right after I remove baked goods from the pans, I wash the pans and dry them with a dishtowel. Then I put them in the oven, which has been turned off. The residual heat is just enough to thoroughly dry the pans and remove any moisture left behind in hard-to-reach spots. This is especially effective for muffin tins, air-insulated pans, and any baking sheets or pans with rolled edges or rims. A few minutes in the still-warm oven does the trick.

—Maria Olaguera,
Overland Park, Kansas



A better blender utensil: celery

When making pesto, chimichurri, or other savory sauces in my blender, I was always nicking rubber spatulas while attempting to push all the herbs and other ingredients down into the blades. One day, I stumbled on the idea of using a stalk of celery, which lets me safely push everything toward the blades (when the blender is not running) without scratching my utensil.

—J.D. McDonald,
Berkeley, California



Keeping gravy warm

I used to get frustrated that the gravy on my Thanksgiving table would get cold quickly in gravy boats. So now I pour the gravy into the teapot that matches my china pattern and put it on a salad plate to catch the drips. The gravy stays hot for the whole meal.

—Marian A. Altman,
Silver Spring, Maryland

TOO GOOD TO FORGET

From *Fine Cooking* #12

Easy-squeeze lemon wedges

Here's how to slice lemon wedges that won't squirt in your eye when you squeeze them: Cut a lemon wedge and make three or four small vertical slits across the wedge's edge. These cuts prevent the juice from squirting out forcefully. When you squeeze the lemon wedge, the juice will run out gently.

—Cynthia A. Jaworski,
Chicago, Illinois



Jazzing up sugar syrup

When making simple syrups to sweeten tea or cocktails, try adding citrus zest or ginger root to the sugar and water syrup when boiling. Lime-scented syrup is great with mojitos, and ginger syrup adds interest to any tropical cocktail. The zest even lends a little color and makes for pretty drinks.

—Christina George,
Davis, California

New life for leftover stuffing

I like to press leftover stuffing into patties that can go with any meal, not just turkey. I dust the patties with flour and fry them in oil until golden brown. If the stuffing is very dry, I add an egg lightly beaten with a fork or a drizzle of turkey broth to make the stuffing moist enough to hold together. I drain the patties on paper towels and keep them warm in the oven until needed.

—Emmy Fox,
Barnard, Vermont

Easy blind baking

When prebaking a pie shell, instead of filling the unbaked pie with pie weights, beans, or rice (which can often make a mess), I just line the unbaked shell with aluminum foil and then nest another pie plate of the same size inside and bake for the desired time. I get perfect pie shells every time.

—Carol Webb,
Kelowna, British Columbia

STAFF CORNER

Better technique for scrubbing pans

I just got a new pan and am trying to ward off any burned-on stains. In my experience, applying a damp sponge to a cleanser like Bon Ami or Bar Keepers Friend doesn't work well. I've found that making a paste with the cleanser and scrubbing it on the pan with my finger is a more effective method. I think sponges absorb too much of the cleanser and don't create enough friction.

—Maryellen Driscoll, editor at large



Pyrex pan is see-through protection for cookbooks

I have a thick muffin cookbook that refuses to stay open at the selected page. Searching for something to hold down the pages, I took out my large Pyrex baking dish. It's perfect, as it keeps the book open and protects the pages, yet I can easily read through it.

—G. Jaskiewicz,
Stoney Creek, Ontario ♦

Plan Ahead for a Delicious Thanksgiving





menu

Herb-Butter
Roasted Turkey with
Pinot Noir Gravy



Sausage-Maple
Bread Stuffing



Broccoli with Eggs &
Lemony Parmesan
Breadcrumbs



Cranberry Sauce
with Vanilla, Maple Syrup
& Cassis



Sweet Potato Gratin
with Caramelized Onions



Classic
Mashed Potatoes

Pulling together
an impressive
dinner is a
breeze when
you've got a
great menu
and a solid plan

BY RIS LACOSTE

My mother makes the best Thanksgiving dinner in the world, and last year, I was finally able to enjoy it for the first time in ages. As usual, my mom turned out a delicious meal for a crowd of twenty all by herself in a tiny kitchen, equipped with just a cutting board and a paring knife. And not a single dish was cold when it reached the table. In the past, I haven't been able to

join my family because I've been cooking dinner for a slightly bigger crowd—600 people—at 1789 Restaurant in Washington, DC, where I was the chef for many years. I used a few more tools, but for both of us, the key to a great meal has always been in the planning. With a good make-ahead strategy, preparing an impressive Thanksgiving spread without a lot of last-minute stress is easier than you think.

This menu, which takes inspiration from dishes I made at the restaurant as well as from some of my mother's favorite recipes, is designed to be prepared in steps. If you follow the timeline below, you'll have a stunning dinner ready by the time your guests gather around the table—and you'll be able to enjoy it, too.

The star of the menu is, of course, the turkey. Mine is slathered with a delicious herb butter that makes it incredibly flavorful and succulent. But to make sure that it's as moist and juicy as possible (especially

the breast meat, which tends to dry out in the oven), I find that brining it for several hours in water, salt, and lots of aromatics works wonders. Not only do the aromatics infuse the turkey with flavor, but brining also helps the meat absorb moisture before cooking, so it ends up juicier once it's roasted. (See p. 48 for more tips on how to roast a moist turkey.)

When it comes to side dishes and gravy, I like to keep things straightforward, so I opt for tradition over experimentation. That's not to say I don't throw in an unexpected ingredient here and there. My cranberry sauce is a case in point. I add vanilla to mellow the cranberries' tartness, and I stir in a bit of crème de cassis (a black-currant-flavored liqueur) to enhance their fruitiness. And while my gravy is uncomplicated, I reduce a little Pinot Noir in the roasting pan before I add the broth and drippings to give it an elegance reminiscent of French sauces.

I also take a dish like broccoli polonaise a step further. It's traditionally topped with chopped hard-boiled eggs, breadcrumbs, and parsley, but I enrich the breadcrumbs with lemon zest for brightness and Parmigiano for extra flavor. And because no Thanksgiving menu should be without sweet potatoes (that's my opinion, anyway), I bake a sumptuous sweet potato gratin spiked with cayenne and perfumed with orange zest. My mashed potatoes, on the other hand, are as traditional—and rich—as they can be; nothing but potatoes and lots of butter and heavy cream. And my sausage-maple stuffing is homey and comforting, with a crunchy top and a soft, moist interior.

I know what you're thinking now: This is a lot to manage. But trust me, it's all doable. Just read through my prep strategy below and start getting organized. And don't forget to have some fun in the process.

Here's a plan to make it happen

One month ahead

Make the decision: Yes, I am cooking Thanksgiving dinner.

Plan the guest list.

Assess refrigerator space and equipment needs (remember, the outdoors can be a great fridge if the temperature is below 40°F).

Decide on your turkey: fresh or frozen? If you opt for an organic or heritage turkey, you may need to order it early.



The week ahead

Make your shopping list and divide it between Saturday and Tuesday shopping. You might want to add store-bought dinner rolls to your list.

Saturday:

Buy the turkey, if frozen.

Buy bread for the stuffing and ingredients for Sunday's prep.

Sunday:

Make the cranberry sauce.

Make the turkey broth.

Make the herb butter.

Cut up and dry the bread for the stuffing.

Tuesday:

Buy the remaining ingredients.

Make the brine.

Make the stuffing (but don't bake it).

Wednesday:

Prep the broccoli: Trim, cut, and parcook the broccoli; cook the eggs; chop the parsley and combine with the eggs; make, toast, and season the breadcrumbs; grate the Parmigiano and combine with breadcrumbs; zest and juice the lemon and combine.

Make the caramelized onions for the gratin.

Brine the turkey.

Chill the white wines.

Set the table.

Make-aheads for your turkey & gravy

Three-Herb Butter

Yields about 1 1/4 cups.

- 1/2 lb. (1 cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- 1/2 cup finely chopped shallots (about 3 oz.)**
- 1/2 cup dry white wine**
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley (from about 1 oz. parsley sprigs)**
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh thyme leaves (from about 3/4 oz. thyme sprigs)**
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh sage leaves (from about 1/2 oz. sage sprigs)**

In a 10-inch skillet, melt 1 Tbs. of the butter over medium heat until it begins to foam. Add the shallots and cook until soft and fragrant, stirring occasionally, about 3 minutes. Add the wine and boil until it's completely evaporated, 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in the parsley, thyme, and sage and cook until fragrant, 2 minutes more. Transfer to a medium bowl and refrigerate. When well chilled, put the remaining butter in the bowl of a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add the herb mixture and beat on medium speed until blended, about 1 minute.



On a large piece of plastic wrap, shape the herb butter into a log. Wrap in the plastic and refrigerate.

Make ahead

The butter can be made up to 1 week ahead and refrigerated or up to 2 months ahead and frozen. If frozen, take the butter out of the freezer and store in the refrigerator a day before you plan to use it.



Turkey Broth

Yields 6 to 7 cups.

- 1 1/2 to 2 lb. turkey parts, such as backs, wings, or legs**
- 1 large onion (about 12 oz.), coarsely chopped**
- 4 large stalks celery (about 9 oz.), coarsely chopped**
- 2 small carrots (about 4 oz.), coarsely chopped**
- 2 cups dry white wine**
- 6 cups low-salt chicken broth**
- Half a small bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley (about 1 oz.)**
- Half a small bunch fresh sage (about 1/2 oz.)**
- Half a small bunch fresh thyme (about 1/3 oz.)**
- 3 bay leaves**
- 1 Tbs. whole black peppercorns**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Put the turkey parts in a small roasting pan (approximately 9x13 inches) along with the onion, celery, and carrots and roast until the meat is well browned, 1 to 1 1/4 hours. Transfer the turkey parts and vegetables to a 4-qt. saucepan.

Add the wine to the roasting pan and scrape any browned bits with a wooden spoon to release them into the wine. Pour the wine into the saucepan and add the chicken broth, herbs, bay leaves, and peppercorns. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, reduce the heat to medium low or low, and simmer gently until the meat is falling off the bone, 30 to 40 minutes, skimming occasionally to remove the fat and foam that rise to the top. Strain the broth through a fine sieve, cover, and refrigerate until ready to use. Remove any solidified fat before using.

Make ahead

The turkey broth can be made up to 4 days ahead and refrigerated or up to 2 months ahead and frozen.

Thanksgiving Day

In the morning:

Pull the herb butter from refrigerator.

Make and bake the sweet potato gratin.

Transfer the stuffing to the baking dish.

Peel and cut the potatoes; cover with cold water.

Four hours before serving:

Prep the turkey: pull from the brine, rinse, butter, and season.

Roast the turkey.

Make roux for the gravy.

One hour before serving:

Take the stuffing and gratin out of the fridge.

Assemble the broccoli dish and let it sit at room temperature.

Make the mashed potatoes and keep warm.

Plate butter for the dinner rolls, if serving.

Put the cranberry sauce in a serving dish.

Half-hour before serving:

Allow the turkey to rest.

Raise the oven temp to 375°F and heat the stuffing, broccoli, and potato gratin.

Heat dinner rolls, if serving.

Make the gravy.

Three secrets for a juicy turkey

Herb-Butter Roasted Turkey with Pinot Noir Gravy

Serves twelve, with leftovers.

To brine the turkey you need space for a 5-gallon pot in your refrigerator. If you have neither the room nor the pot, you can cook the brine in a smaller pan and proceed with one of the alternative methods described in *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 78.

FOR THE BRINE:

2½ gallons water
2½ cups kosher salt
1 cup maple syrup
24 bay leaves
24 cloves garlic, peeled
⅓ cup whole black peppercorns
2 small bunches fresh flat-leaf parsley (about 4 oz.)
1 small bunch fresh sage (about 1 oz.)
1 small bunch fresh thyme (about ⅔ oz.)
6 medium sprigs fresh rosemary
Zest and juice of 4 large lemons
(remove the zest in long strips with a vegetable peeler)

FOR THE TURKEY:

14- to 16-lb. natural turkey (preferably fresh)
1 recipe Three-Herb Butter (p. 47), slightly softened
2 Tbs. kosher salt
2 Tbs. freshly ground black pepper
2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, melted

FOR THE GRAVY:

2½ oz. (5 Tbs.) unsalted butter
2½ oz. (½ cup) all-purpose flour
4 cups turkey broth (recipe, p. 47) or low-salt chicken broth
1½ cups Pinot Noir
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Two days ahead, prepare the

brine: Put all of the brine ingredients in a 5-gallon stockpot with a lid. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat, cool to room temperature, cover the pot, and refrigerate the brine until cold, preferably overnight.

One day ahead, brine the turkey:

If already loose, trim the tail from the turkey. Otherwise, leave it attached. Remove and discard the giblets. Keep the neck and tail in the refrigerator. Rinse the turkey and put it in the pot with the brine. Refrigerate for 8 to 24 hours before roasting the turkey.



1 **Brine** the turkey in water, salt, and aromatics. The meat absorbs moisture (and flavor), so it doesn't dry out while roasting.



2 **Rub** herb butter between the skin and meat. When the butter melts, it infuses the turkey with flavor and creates rich drippings for basting.



3 **Cover with foil** during the first two hours of roasting to further help the meat stay tender and juicy.

Prepare and roast the turkey:

Position a rack in the bottom of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Remove the turkey from the brine and discard the brine. Rinse the turkey well, pat it dry, and set it in a large flameproof roasting pan. Gently slide your hand between the breast meat and skin to separate the skin so you can apply the herb butter. Slice the herb butter into ¼-inch-thick rounds and distribute them evenly between the skin and breast meat, completely covering the breast. Maneuver a few pieces between the skin and legs, too. Next, with your hands on the outside of the turkey, massage the butter under the skin to distribute it evenly and break up the round pieces so the turkey won't look polka-dotted when it's done.

Sprinkle 1 Tbs. of the salt and 1 Tbs. of the pepper in the cavity of the turkey. Tie the legs together. Fold the wings back and tuck the tips under the neck area. Flip the turkey onto its breast, pat the back dry, and brush with some of the melted butter. Sprinkle with some of the remaining salt and pepper. Flip

the turkey over, pat dry again, brush all over with the remaining butter, and sprinkle with the remaining salt and pepper.

Put the reserved neck and tail in the pan with the turkey. Cover the pan very tightly with foil and put in the oven, legs pointing to the back of the oven, if possible (the legs can handle the higher heat in the back better than the breast can). Roast undisturbed for 2 hours and then uncover carefully (watch out for escaping steam). Continue to roast, basting every 15 minutes with the drippings that have collected in the pan, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of both thighs reads 170° to 175°F and the juices run clear when the thermometer is removed, 45 minutes to 1 hour more for a 15-lb. turkey.

Remove the turkey from the oven. With a wad of paper towels in each hand, move the turkey to a serving platter, cover with foil to keep warm, and set aside. Discard the neck and tail; reserve the drippings in the roasting pan. Let the turkey rest for 30 minutes while you make the gravy and heat the side dishes.

An easy wine gravy in three steps



1 Make a roux by adding flour to melted butter and whisking until golden brown. This will be your thickener.

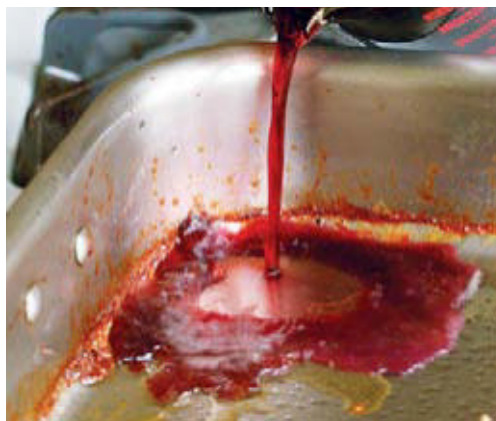
Make the gravy: Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until foaming. Add the flour and quickly whisk it into the butter until it's completely incorporated. Cook, whisking constantly, until the roux smells toasty and darkens slightly to a light caramel color, about 2 minutes. Watch carefully, as you don't want it to get too dark. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Pour the reserved turkey drippings into a clear, heatproof container, preferably a fat separator cup. (Don't rinse the roasting pan.) Let sit until the fat rises to the top, and then pour out 1 cup of the juices (or remove and discard the fat with a ladle and measure 1 cup of the juices). Combine the juices with the turkey or chicken broth.

Set the roasting pan on top of the stove over two burners on medium heat. Add the Pinot Noir and simmer, scraping the pan with a wooden spoon to release any stuck-on bits, until the wine has reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Add the broth mixture and simmer to meld the flavors, about 5 minutes. Whisk in the roux a little at a time until you have reached your desired thickness (you may not want to use it all). Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper to taste. Strain through a fine sieve and transfer to a serving vessel.

Make ahead

The brine should be prepared 2 days before the Thanksgiving dinner. The turkey should be brined the day before. The roux may be prepared on Thanksgiving day and left at room temperature; whisk to recombine before using.



2 Pour wine into the roasting pan and reduce it to add flavor and character to the gravy. Then pour in the broth and the drippings.



3 Whisk the roux into the gravy a little at a time to thicken it just the way you like it.





Sweet Potato Gratin with Caramelized Onions

Serves twelve.

2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter; more for the baking dish
2 lb. yellow onions, thinly sliced (about 6 cups)
½ tsp. kosher salt; more to taste
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more to taste
2 cups heavy cream
3 sprigs fresh thyme
½ Tbs. freshly grated orange zest (from 1 orange)
⅛ tsp. cayenne
4 lb. sweet potatoes (about 5 medium)
1 cup (4 oz.) pecan halves, toasted
2 Tbs. fresh breadcrumbs
2 Tbs. freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Cook the onions: Heat the butter in a heavy-based 12-inch skillet over medium heat until it begins to foam. Add the onions, reduce the heat to medium low, and cook slowly, stirring occasionally, until the onions are soft and nicely browned, 30 to 40 minutes. Season with the ½ tsp. each salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool slightly.

Assemble the gratin: Meanwhile, put the heavy cream, thyme, orange zest, and cayenne in a 2- to 3-qt. saucepan. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, and steep for 15 minutes. Remove and discard the thyme sprigs.

While the cream is steeping, peel and cut the sweet potatoes crosswise into ⅛-inch-thick slices (use a mandolin if you have one).

Position a rack in the center of the oven and another rack directly below. Heat the oven to 350°F.

Lightly butter a 9x13-inch baking dish. Arrange about one-third of the sliced sweet potatoes in a double layer on the bottom of the dish, slightly overlapping the slices in each layer. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Spread half of the onions over the potatoes and drizzle about one third of the

cream (⅔ cup) over the onions. Arrange another third of the potatoes in two more overlapping layers and season lightly with more salt and pepper. Spread the remaining onions over the potatoes and drizzle another third of the cream over the onions. Use the remaining sweet potato slices to make two final layers. Press down on the layers with your hands to compact and flatten them. Season lightly with salt and pepper, and drizzle the remaining cream over the potatoes, trying to cover them as much as possible.

Put a foil-lined baking sheet on the lower rack to catch any drips. Cover the gratin tightly with foil and bake on the center rack until the potatoes are almost tender but still offer a little resistance when pierced with a fork or skewer, about 1 hour. Remove the foil and bake until the sweet potatoes are completely tender and the top is lightly browned and bubbly, 30 to 40 minutes.

While the gratin is baking, put the pecans, breadcrumbs, and Parmigiano in a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped.

Raise the oven temperature to 375°F. Cover the top of the gratin with the pecan mixture and return the baking dish to the oven. Bake until the top is lightly browned, about 10 minutes.

Make ahead

The onions can be made up to 3 days in advance. Transfer them to a bowl, cover with plastic, and refrigerate.

The gratin can be baked up to 1 day ahead to the point of adding the breadcrumb topping. Reheat at 375°F until bubbling and hot throughout, about 20 minutes, and then add the topping and bake 10 minutes more.

Sausage-Maple Bread Stuffing

Yields about 12 cups; serves twelve.

1½ lb. dense, chewy bread, cut into ¾-inch cubes (about 13 cups)
5 oz. (10 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened
⅓ cup chopped fresh thyme leaves (from about 1 oz. thyme sprigs)
⅓ cup chopped fresh sage leaves (from about ¾ oz. sage sprigs)
¾ tsp. poultry seasoning
3 cups medium-diced yellow onion (2 medium)
3 cups medium-diced celery (6 large stalks)
7½ cups low-salt chicken broth
2 bay leaves
1 smoked ham hock (about 1 lb.)

1 lb. bulk pork breakfast sausage
⅓ cup maple syrup
1½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
Kosher salt

Lay the bread cubes in a single layer on two baking sheets. Leave out to dry completely at room temperature, tossing once or twice, for about 2 days.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

In a heavy-based, 8-qt. stockpot or Dutch oven, melt 5 Tbs. of the butter over medium heat until it begins to foam. Stir in the thyme, sage, and poultry seasoning and cook just enough to coat the herbs and season the butter, 30 to 60 seconds. Stir in the onions and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and fragrant, about 15 minutes. Add the chicken broth, bay leaves, and ham hock and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer until the liquid reduces by one-third, about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, put the sausage on a rimmed baking sheet and break it into quarter-size chunks. Roast until cooked through, about 15 minutes. Let cool, and then chop the sausage into smaller bits.

Add the sausage to the broth and simmer just to allow the flavors to meld, about 5 minutes. Remove the ham hock and bay leaves. Discard the bay leaves and set the hock aside to cool. Stir the dried bread, several cups at a time, into the broth until all of the broth is absorbed and the bread cubes are well moistened. Stir in the maple syrup, pepper, and the remaining 5 Tbs. butter.

When the hock is cool enough to handle, pick off the meat, chop it into small pieces, and add to the stuffing. Season to taste with salt if necessary (depending on the sausage and ham hock, both of which are salty, there may already be enough).

Transfer the stuffing to a 9x13-inch baking dish and bake uncovered at 375°F until heated through and crisp on top, about 20 minutes if freshly made, or about 30 minutes if made ahead.

Make ahead

The bread can be dried weeks in advance, bagged, frozen, and then thawed when ready to use. The stuffing can be made (but not baked) up to 2 days ahead and refrigerated, covered.



Broccoli with Eggs & Lemony Parmesan Breadcrumbs

Serves twelve.

3 large eggs
2 cups fresh breadcrumbs
½ lb. (1 cup) unsalted butter
½ Tbs. sweet Hungarian paprika
1 tsp. plus ½ cup kosher salt
½ tsp. freshly ground white pepper
½ cup tightly packed, freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 Tbs. finely grated lemon zest (from 2 to 3 lemons)
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
Two 1-lb. heads broccoli

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

Put the eggs in a small saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, turn off the heat, and cover the pan. Let sit, covered,

for 10 minutes. Immediately pour off the hot water and run the eggs under a steady stream of cold water. Peel the eggs right away. Coarsely chop the eggs and set them aside.

Spread the breadcrumbs on a rimmed baking sheet and toast them in the oven until lightly browned, about 5 minutes.

Melt 8 Tbs. of the butter in a heavy-based 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the breadcrumbs, paprika, 1 tsp. of the salt, and the pepper and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute, just to meld the flavors. Remove from the heat and stir in the chopped eggs, Parmigiano, parsley, lemon zest, and lemon juice.

In a large pot, bring 1 gallon of water and the remaining ½ cup of the salt to a boil. Trim off the bottom of the broccoli stems, cut each broccoli head lengthwise in half, and then cut each half lengthwise into six spears. Add the broccoli to the boiling water and cook until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes.

Drain the broccoli well and arrange in a snug single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Melt the remaining 8 Tbs. butter in the micro-

wave or in a small saucepan over medium heat. Top the broccoli with the breadcrumb mixture and then drizzle on the melted butter. Bake until the broccoli is heated through and the topping is crisp, about 20 minutes. Transfer the broccoli to a serving platter and then scatter any topping that fell off back over the broccoli.

Make ahead

A day ahead, you can parcook the broccoli and combine the eggs with the parsley, the seasoned breadcrumbs with the Parmigiano, and the lemon juice with the zest. (Store everything separately in the fridge.) Then you can combine the topping ingredients, assemble the dish while the turkey roasts, and bake it while the turkey rests.

wine choices

Look for medium-bodied reds and whites

Young, fruity white wines with crisp acidity and little oak, and red wines with forward fruit, medium acidity, and soft tannins are ideal mates to the sweet, tangy, and zesty flavors of this menu.

Look for crisp Sauvignon Blancs, fruity off-dry Rieslings, and lightly oaked Viogniers. I like the 2006 Babich Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14), the 2006 Mönchhof Estate Riesling, Germany (\$15), and the 2006 Zaca Mesa Viognier, Santa Ynez Valley (\$18).

For reds, look for Pinot Noirs, Gamays, or lightly oaked Merlots, such as the 2005 Edna Valley Pinot Noir (\$18), the 2005 Chateau de la Chaize Brouilly (\$16), or the 2005 Penfolds Koonunga Hill Cabernet Merlot, Australia (\$14).

—Tim Gaiser,
contributing editor



Cranberry Sauce with Vanilla, Maple Syrup & Cassis

Yields about 4 cups.

6 cups (about 1½ lb.) fresh or frozen cranberries, picked over and rinsed
⅔ cup granulated sugar
⅓ cup fresh orange juice (from 1 orange)
⅓ cup crème de cassis (black-currant liqueur)
¼ cup maple syrup
1 Tbs. finely grated orange zest (from 1 orange)
Half a vanilla bean, split and scraped

Put 3 cups of the cranberries and all the remaining ingredients in a 3- or 4-qt. saucepan. Bring to a boil over

medium-high heat, reduce the heat to medium, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries have popped and broken down and the juices look slightly syrupy, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the remaining 3 cups cranberries and cook until these have popped, 3 to 5 minutes more. Remove from the heat, discard the vanilla bean, and let cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate if not serving right away.

Make ahead

The cranberry sauce can be made up to one week in advance and kept covered in the refrigerator. Return to room temperature before serving.

Classic Mashed Potatoes

Yields about 12 cups; serves twelve.

6 lb. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks
⅓ cup kosher salt; more to taste
2 cups heavy cream, half-and-half, or whole milk
½ lb. (1 cup) unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces
¼ tsp. freshly ground white pepper; more to taste

Put the potatoes in an 8-qt. stockpot. Add the salt and enough water to cover the potatoes by about 2 inches. Cover and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, uncovered, until the potatoes are tender but not falling apart, 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the heavy cream (or half-and-half or milk) in the microwave or in a medium saucepan over medium heat until hot but not boiling. Keep hot.

Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot over low heat. Add the butter, about two-thirds of the hot cream, and the white pepper. With a potato masher, mash the potatoes to your desired consistency, adding the remaining cream if they seem dry. Season with more salt and white pepper to taste.

To keep them warm, transfer the mashed potatoes to a heatproof bowl, cover them tightly with foil, and set the bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water.

Ris Lacoste is the former executive chef at 1789 Restaurant in Georgetown, Washington, DC. ♦

An Essential Guide to Roasting Vegetables



If there's someone in your life who doesn't like vegetables, here's how to turn things around: Roast the vegetables. Trust me, roasting browns them nicely on the outside, concentrating and sweetening their flavor in a way that even avowed veggie haters find hard not to like—and that goes for even the most unpopular of vegetables, like turnips and Brussels sprouts. But what's especially great about roasting is that it's fairly quick and hands-off, and much of the prep can be done ahead of roasting time. You can cut up the vegetables (except potatoes and sweet potatoes) in the morning, if you like, so by the time you're ready to roast, all you have to do is toss them with oil and seasonings, spread them on a pan, and check on them occasionally as they roast.

Easy ways to add flavor

Roasting gives vegetables enough extra flavor that they're terrific to eat as is—maybe brightened with a dash of lemon juice. This is perfect for a casual dinner, but for fancier occasions I've come up with several simple ways to add even more flavor. I toss the vegetables with a Moroccan-style spice rub or a lemony oil infused with rosemary and thyme before roasting, as both can stand up to the high heat of the oven. But I reserve flavorings that would burn in a hot oven to add after roasting. These include a Japanese toasted sesame salt called *gomasio* and a pan-Asian gingery lemon-soy splash. For a touch of the Middle East, I make a toasted garlic and coriander oil, and for a taste of France, the caramelized shallot butter is a personal favorite.

In general, when flavoring roasted vegetables (particularly after roasting), you want to avoid liquids because they'll soften any crisp edges that develop during roasting. The ginger-soy splash here is a compromise: I love the flavors enough to sacrifice a little crispness—plus it's really not much liquid.

A reliable technique and great tips—plus exciting flavoring ideas for your favorite vegetables

BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT



Four tips for successful roasting

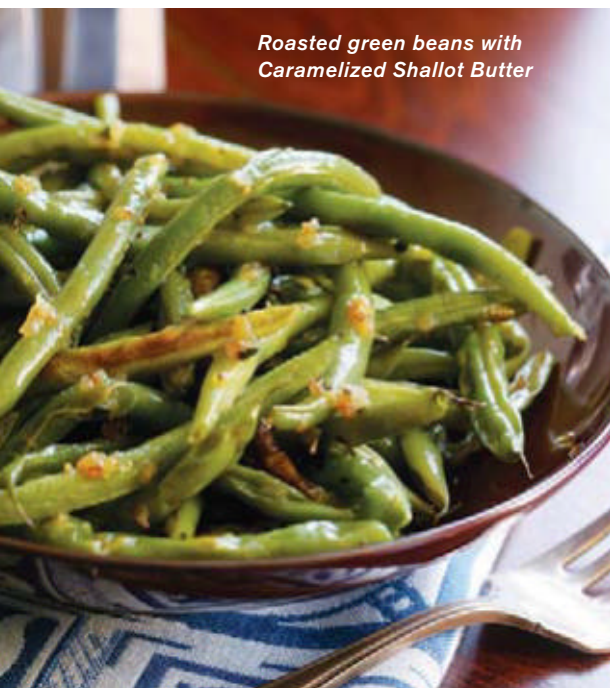
As I developed my basic roasted vegetable technique, I came up with a few pointers:

Roast in a very hot oven (475°F). The vegetables cook quickly—many of those in the chart at right take only 15 to 20 minutes—but they still have a chance to brown nicely on the outside by the time they become tender inside.

Cut evenly. It's very important that you cut the vegetables in pieces of about the same size. Unevenly sized pieces won't roast and brown in the same amount of time, and you'll end up with both over-roasted and underroasted vegetables.

Line the pan. To prevent sticking, line the pan with a sheet of parchment; otherwise, when you have to pry stuck vegetables off the baking sheet, it's the tasty brown bottoms that are left on the pan.

Position vegetables near the pan's edges. If the vegetable pieces cover the pan sparsely, arrange them more toward the edges of the pan. Pieces near the edge brown better.



*Roasted green beans with
Caramelized Shallot Butter*

master recipe

Basic Roasted Vegetables

This method is for roasting one type of vegetable per baking sheet. For roasting a combination of vegetables see the box at far right.

1 lb. vegetable (see chart at right for choices)

1 to 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp. kosher salt; more to taste
Freshly ground black pepper
Fresh lemon juice (optional)

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 475° F. Line a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet with parchment. Prepare the vegetable according to the instructions in the chart at right. In a medium bowl, toss the vegetable with enough of the olive oil to coat generously, the salt, and a few grinds of pepper. If using a flavoring before roasting (see p. 56), toss it with the vegetable now.

Turn the vegetable out onto the baking sheet and arrange the pieces so that they are evenly spaced and lying on a cut side (if that applies). If the pieces cover the baking sheet sparsely, arrange them toward the edges of the baking sheet for the best browning. Roast according to the instructions in the chart.

Return the vegetables to the bowl in which you tossed them with the oil, or put them in a clean serving bowl. If they seem a bit dry, drizzle them with a little oil. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and lemon juice or another flavoring (see p. 57), if using.

How to prep and

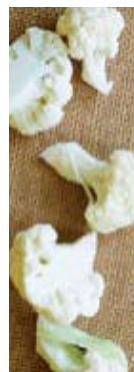


Sweet potatoes

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Peel and cut into 1-inch pieces.

How to roast: Roast until lightly browned on bottom, 10 minutes. Flip and roast until tender, 5 to 10 minutes.

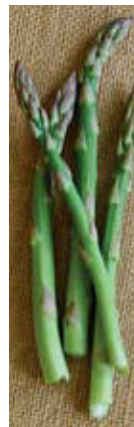


Cauliflower

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Trim and cut into 1- to 1½-inch florets.

How to roast: Roast, stirring every 10 minutes, until tender and lightly browned, 20 to 25 minutes total.



Asparagus

(medium or large, not small)

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Rinse, pat dry, and snap off tough bottom ends.

How to roast: Roast for 5 minutes, flip, and roast until tender and a bit shriveled, 5 to 8 minutes.



Fennel

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Quarter lengthwise. Trim the base and core, leaving just enough of the core intact to hold the layers together. Cut into ¾- to 1-inch wedges.

How to roast: Roast until the pieces begin to brown on the edges, 15 minutes. Flip and roast until tender and nicely browned, 10 minutes.

roast 15 vegetables



Turnips

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Peel and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch pieces.

How to roast: Roast until browned on bottom, 10 to 15 minutes. Flip and roast until tender, about 5 minutes.



Beets

4 servings per pound

Prep: Trim, peel, and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch-thick wedges.

How to roast: Roast 15 minutes, flip, roast until tender, 10 to 15 minutes.



Green beans

4 servings per pound

Prep: Trim stem ends.

How to roast: Roast until tender, a bit shriveled, and slightly browned, about 15 minutes. No need to flip.



Brussels sprouts

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Trim, halve lengthwise.

How to roast: Arrange cut side down on baking sheet. Roast until tender and browned, about 15 minutes. No need to flip.



Rutabaga

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Peel and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces.

How to roast: Roast until browned on bottom, 13 to 15 minutes. Flip and roast until tender, 5 to 10 minutes.



Butternut squash

4 servings per pound

Prep: Peel and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch pieces.

How to roast: Roast until browned on bottom, 15 minutes. Flip and roast until tender, 5 to 10 minutes.



Potatoes

(red, yellow, russet)

2 to 3 servings per pound

Prep: Peel or scrub well and dry. Cut into 1-inch pieces.

How to roast: Roast until browned on bottom, 10 to 15 minutes. Flip and continue to roast until tender, 5 minutes.



Parsnips

2 to 3 servings per pound

Prep: Peel, halve crosswise, halve or quarter thick end lengthwise, then cut all crosswise into 2-inch lengths.

How to roast: Roast until browned on bottom, about 10 minutes. Flip and roast until tender, about 5 minutes.



Mushrooms

(cremini or small white)

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Wipe clean and trim stems flush with cap.

How to roast: Roast stem side down until brown on bottom, 20 to 25 minutes. Flip and roast until browned on top, 5 to 10 minutes.



Carrots

3 to 4 servings per pound

Prep: Peel. (If thick, cut in half crosswise to separate thick end from thin end; halve thick end lengthwise.) Cut crosswise into 1-inch lengths.

How to roast: Roast until lightly browned on bottom, 12 to 15 minutes. Flip and roast until tender and slightly shriveled, 3 to 5 minutes.



Broccoli crowns

2 to 3 servings per pound

Prep: Trim and peel the stem; slice it into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick disks. Where the stem starts to branch out, split the florets though the stem so that each piece is $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches wide.

How to roast: Roast until the floret tops begin to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir and continue to roast until tender, 3 to 6 minutes.

Roasting a medley of vegetables

Because they'll probably have different cooking times, it's best to roast a variety of vegetables (for a total of 1 pound) separately. You can roast them on different sections of the same baking sheet or, even better, on a separate baking sheet for each vegetable—this makes it easier to remove each from the oven when it's done. You can then combine them after roasting.



*Roasted fennel with
Rosemary-Thyme-Lemon Oil*

Roast a bigger batch

If you need more servings than a single batch yields, you can easily roast more vegetables by doubling or tripling the recipe on p. 54. Just don't crowd the vegetables on the baking sheet—they won't brown as well if they're packed too closely. Ideally, there should be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch between them. Use another baking sheet if necessary and swap the sheets' positions in the oven about halfway through the roasting time so that the vegetables will roast evenly.

Add zing to your roasted



Pair with beets, butternut squash, carrots, cauliflower, fennel, mushrooms, parsnips, potatoes, and sweet potatoes.



Pair with butternut squash, carrots, cauliflower, parsnips, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and turnips.

Rosemary-Thyme-Lemon Oil

Yields enough for 1 batch of roasted vegetables.

Zest of 1 large lemon,
removed in long strips
with a vegetable peeler
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil;
more as needed
1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary
1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme

In a small saucepan, combine the lemon zest and oil. Set over medium-low heat and cook until the lemon zest bubbles steadily for about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat and let cool briefly, about 3 minutes. Stir in the herbs and let sit at least 20 minutes before using.

Substitute the flavored oil for the plain olive oil in the master recipe and toss with the vegetables and salt and pepper before roasting. Once the vegetables are on the baking sheet, pick out and discard the lemon zest.

If the vegetables seem a little dry after roasting, toss them with additional oil before serving.

Moroccan-Style Spice Rub

Yields about 5 tsp., enough for 5 batches of roasted vegetables.

2 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. ground coriander
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. chili powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. sweet paprika,
preferably Hungarian
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground allspice
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground ginger
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. cayenne
Pinch ground cloves

In a small bowl, mix all of the spices. In addition to the oil, salt, and pepper in the master recipe, toss 1 tsp. of the spice blend with a batch of vegetables before roasting.

Before roasting

vegetables with these delicious flavorings



Pair with asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, green beans, parsnips, sweet potatoes, and turnips.

Sesame Salt (*gomasio*)

Yields about 2 Tbs., enough for 3 batches of roasted vegetables.

2 Tbs. sesame seeds
½ tsp. sea salt

In a small dry skillet, toast the sesame seeds over medium heat, stirring almost constantly, until light golden-brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the salt and cook, stirring, for about 30 seconds. Transfer to a small bowl and cool completely.

Put the salted seeds in a clean spice grinder and pulse a few times to grind coarsely—you should still see a few whole seeds in the mixture. Toss about 2 tsp. sesame salt with a batch of vegetables after roasting.



Pair with asparagus, Brussels sprouts, butternut squash, carrots, fennel, green beans, mushrooms, parsnips, potatoes, and sweet potatoes.

Caramelized Shallot Butter

Yields about ¼ cup, enough for 3 batches of roasted vegetables.

3½ Tbs. unsalted butter, softened
1 large shallot, finely diced (⅓ cup)
½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
½ tsp. finely grated lemon zest
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat 1 Tbs. of the butter in a small saucepan or skillet over medium-low heat until melted. Add the shallot and cook, stirring frequently, until deeply browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the thyme. Cool completely.

In a small bowl, combine the shallot mixture with the remaining 2½ Tbs. butter and the lemon zest. Stir to blend well. Lightly season to taste with salt and pepper.

Scrape the butter onto a small piece of plastic wrap, mold into a log shape, and wrap in the plastic. Refrigerate until ready to use. Toss about one-third of the butter (a generous tablespoon) with a batch of vegetables after roasting.



Pair with beets, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, and mushrooms.

Ginger-Lemon-Soy Splash

Yields enough for 1 batch of roasted vegetables.

1-inch piece fresh ginger
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
½ tsp. soy sauce

Line a small bowl with a piece of cheesecloth or set a small fine strainer in the bowl. Peel and finely grate the ginger. Put the grated ginger in the cheesecloth or strainer and extract the ginger juice by gathering the cloth around the ginger and squeezing or by pressing the ginger in the sieve with a small spoon. Transfer ½ tsp. ginger juice to another small bowl (discard the rest or save for another use). Stir in the lemon juice and soy sauce. Toss with a batch of vegetables after roasting.



Pair with asparagus, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, fennel, green beans, mushrooms, and turnips.

Toasted Garlic & Coriander Oil

Yields enough for 1 to 1½ batches of roasted vegetables.

1½ Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tbs. finely chopped garlic (2 large cloves)
2 tsp. ground coriander
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a small saucepan, combine the oil and garlic. Set over medium-low heat and cook until the smaller pieces of garlic turn light golden-brown, about 3 minutes. Stir in the coriander and cook for about 20 seconds. Immediately remove from the heat and transfer to a small heatproof bowl to prevent overcooking. Keep warm.

Sprinkle the roasted vegetables with the lemon juice, season to taste with salt and pepper, and arrange on a serving platter. Spoon the toasted garlic oil over the vegetables.

Jennifer Armentrout is Fine Cooking's senior food editor and test kitchen manager. ♦

After roasting



Go Nuts: Add Pecans to

BY KAREN BARKER

Every Thanksgiving, my husband and I throw a potluck celebration with friends, and since I'm a pastry chef, I'm always the designated baker. Though we make a different menu every year, certain elements of the meal always remain the same, and this means that there's a pecan pie—or some other dessert that includes toasty, buttery pecans—on the menu. To me, it makes sense to serve pecans at Thanksgiving because they're native to North America, and I naturally equate them with the harvest season. But I definitely wouldn't limit my use of pecans to autumn; their distinctly sweet flavor and soft, meaty texture make them a great ingredient in many desserts, no matter what time of year.

Pecan savvy: what to look for

In the fall, I occasionally see in-shell pecans in stores, but it's pretty time-consuming (and messy) to hand-shell them. So I prefer shelled pecans, which are usually vacuum-packed in cans, jars, or cellophane bags to protect against humidity and oxidation.

You might also find pecans sold in bulk, but make sure they're fresh, since they can become rancid if they've been sitting around in storage for too long. Taste one—if it's rancid, the nut will have an unpleasant, bitter flavor. A fresh pecan, on the other hand,

will be faintly sweet and buttery. Look for plump ones that are uniform in color and size.

Keeping pecans fresh

Once you've bought pecans, date them (or any stored nut) so that they're used in a timely fashion. In-shell pecans can be stored in a cool, dry place for 6 to 12 months. An open package of shelled nuts should be resealed or transferred to an airtight container. They will keep for several weeks in the refrigerator or up to one year in the freezer.

While this preserves fresh-

ness, refrigerated or frozen nuts can turn flabby in texture. That's why I often lightly toast them (even if a recipe doesn't call for toasting), which brings back their crunch, accentuates their flavor, and tempers their astringency. Toast pecans in the oven at 350°F for 5 to 8 minutes. (Set a timer—the nuts can burn easily.)

Pecan pairings

Pecans marry well with a wide range of ingredients. In the upside-down cake shown at right, pecans act as an earthy foil to the bright, sunny pineapple. Since apple season and the pecan harvest coincide, I combine the two ingredients in a cinnamon-accented crisp. The traditional southern combo of bourbon, brown sugar, and buttermilk comes together in a nut-studded poundcake. And finally, I love pecan pie, but I often find it too cloying. In my version, chocolate and espresso moderate the pie's sugary nature. When I make this pie at Thanksgiving, it's always the first dessert to disappear.

Apple Crisp
with Pecans &
Orange

Bourbon-
Glazed Brown
Sugar Pecan
Poundcake

Pecan
Pineapple
Upside-Down
Cake

Chocolate
Espresso
Pecan Pie

More Than Just Pie



Pecan Pineapple
Upside-Down Cake

Pecan Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

Serves ten to twelve.

7 oz. (14 Tbs.) unsalted butter at room temperature; more for the pan
½ cup plus 2 Tbs. light or dark brown sugar
Six to eight ¼-inch-thick fresh pineapple rings (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 78)
¼ to ⅓ cup pecan halves
½ cup lightly toasted pecan pieces
5½ oz. (1¼ cups) cake flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
¼ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. kosher salt
1 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
½ cup plus 2 Tbs. buttermilk

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 10x2-inch round cake pan or 10-inch cast-iron skillet.

Combine 6 Tbs. of the butter with the brown sugar in a small saucepan and cook over medium heat, whisking until the butter is melted, the sugar is dissolved, and the mixture is smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and immediately pour the mixture in the bottom of the prepared pan, tilting to evenly cover the surface.

Set one pineapple ring in the center of the pan. Surround it with several other rings, packing them tightly or even overlapping them slightly. Cut the remaining rings in quarters or sixths and fill in the spaces around the perimeter of the pan. Set a pecan half, curved side down, in the center of each pineapple ring. If you like, fill in any additional spaces with pecan halves, curved sides down. (You may not need all the pecans.)

Finely grind the toasted pecan pieces in a food processor but don't overprocess or you'll make pecan butter. In a small bowl, sift together the cake flour, baking powder, nutmeg, and baking soda. Add the salt and ground pecans, mix well, and reserve.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the remaining 8 Tbs. butter with the granulated sugar on medium speed until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Beat in the eggs one at a time, pausing to scrape the bowl. Mix in the vanilla. On low speed, alternate adding the dry ingredients and the buttermilk in five additions, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients, scraping the bowl once or twice, and mixing until the batter is smooth. Pour the batter over the fruit and spread it evenly with a spatula.

Bake until the cake is golden brown and springs back when pressed lightly in the center with a fingertip, 40 to 45 minutes.



Position one pineapple ring in the center of the pan. Surround it with several other rings, packing them tightly—it's fine if they overlap slightly. Cut the remaining rings in quarters or sixths and fill in the spaces around the perimeter of the pan.



Set a pecan half, curved side down, in the center of each pineapple ring. If you like, fill in any additional spaces with pecan halves, curved sides down.

Transfer the cake to a rack and cool in the pan for 15 minutes. Run the tip of a paring knife around the edge of the cake. Cover with a serving plate, and gripping both the cake and the plate, invert the two. Carefully lift off the cake pan, rearranging the fruit if necessary. Allow the cake to cool completely before serving.



Apple Crisp with Pecans & Orange

Serves eight.

About 1 tsp. softened butter for the baking dish

FOR THE TOPPING:

4½ oz. (1 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour

⅓ cup old-fashioned rolled oats

¼ cup plus 2 Tbs. lightly packed light brown sugar

¼ cup plus 2 Tbs. granulated sugar

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

¼ tsp. kosher salt

4 oz. (½ cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces

1 cup lightly toasted, coarsely chopped pecans

FOR THE FILLING:

3 lb. Granny Smith apples

(6 large or 8 medium), peeled, cored, and sliced ¼ inch thick

½ cup granulated sugar

2 Tbs. fresh orange juice (from 1 orange)

1 Tbs. finely grated orange zest (from 1 orange)

1½ tsp. unbleached all-purpose flour

¾ tsp. ground cinnamon

⅛ tsp. kosher salt

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly butter a 9x9x2-inch pan or other 10-cup ovenproof baking dish.

Make the topping: In a food processor, pulse the flour and the oats until the oats are finely ground. Add the brown sugar, granulated sugar, cinnamon, and salt and pulse until just combined. Add the butter and pulse in short bursts until the mixture just starts to form crumbs and has a streusel-like consistency. When squeezed together with light pressure, the mixture should just clump. Add the pecans and pulse just to blend; you don't want to chop the nuts

further. (You can make and refrigerate this topping up to 2 days ahead, or freeze for up to 2 months. Bring to room temperature before using.)

Assemble and bake the crisp: In a large bowl, combine all of the filling ingredients and gently toss until well combined. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish. Press down to compact slightly into an even layer. Sprinkle the topping in a thick, even layer all over the filling.

Bake until the topping is golden brown, the juices are bubbling around the edges, and the apples are soft when pierced with the tip of a knife, 55 to 60 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool for 20 to 30 minutes before serving. The crisp can be served warm or at room temperature, but it's best served the day it's made.



Bourbon-Glazed Brown Sugar Pecan Poundcake

Serves twelve.

FOR THE CAKE:

12 oz. (1½ cups) unsalted butter, at room temperature; more for the pan
½ cup fine, dry, plain bread crumbs (store-bought are fine)
15¾ oz. (3½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. kosher salt
3 cups lightly packed light brown sugar
5 large eggs, at room temperature
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
¾ cup buttermilk
¼ cup bourbon
2¼ cups toasted, coarsely chopped pecans

FOR THE GLAZE:

⅓ cup granulated sugar
⅓ cup bourbon

Make the cake: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 10-inch (12-cup) Bundt pan and dust it with the bread crumbs, shaking out and discarding the excess crumbs.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, and baking soda into a medium bowl. Add the salt and mix with a rubber spatula.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium

speed, gradually adding the brown sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing just enough to incorporate and pausing to scrape the bowl once or twice. Add the vanilla and mix until just combined.

In a measuring cup, combine the buttermilk with the bourbon. With the mixer running on low speed, alternate adding the flour mixture and the buttermilk mixture in five additions, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients, stopping occasionally to scrape the bowl. Mix until just combined. Add the toasted pecan pieces and mix until the nuts are just incorporated.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top with a spatula. Bake until the cake is golden brown and a cake tester or skewer comes out clean, 65 to 70 minutes. Transfer the cake to a rack and cool in the pan for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the glaze: Combine the sugar and bourbon in a small saucepan or skillet. Cook over medium-low heat until the mixture comes to a simmer and the sugar dissolves, 3 to 5 minutes. Turn the cake out of the pan onto a cooling rack. With a pastry brush, brush the warm glaze over the entire surface of the cake. Allow to cool completely. This cake can be made up to 2 days ahead.



Chocolate Espresso Pecan Pie

Serves eight to ten.

FOR THE CRUST:

6 oz. (1⅓ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more for rolling out the crust
1 tsp. granulated sugar
¼ tsp. plus ⅛ tsp. kosher salt
2 oz. (4 Tbs.) chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
2 oz. (4 Tbs.) vegetable shortening, chilled and cut into ½-inch pieces (put it in the freezer for 15 minutes before cutting)

FOR THE FILLING:

3 oz. unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter
4 large eggs
1 cup light corn syrup
1 cup granulated sugar
¼ tsp. kosher salt
2 Tbs. instant espresso powder (or instant coffee)
2 Tbs. coffee liqueur (Kahlúa or Caffé Lolita)
2 cups lightly toasted, coarsely chopped pecans
About ½ cup perfect pecan halves



Pecan halves make a decorative border



Arrange the pecan halves in a ring around the perimeter of the pie shell interior, keeping the points of the pecans facing in and the backs just touching the pie shell.



Carefully pour the filling over the pecans until the shell is three-quarters full. The pecans will rise to the top as the pie bakes.

Make the crust: Pulse the flour, sugar, and salt in a food processor just to blend. Add the butter and shortening and pulse several times until the mixture resembles coarse cornmeal, 8 to 10 pulses. Transfer the mixture to a medium bowl. Tossing and stirring quickly with a fork, gradually add enough cold water (2 to 4 Tbs.) that the dough just begins to come together. It should clump together easily if lightly squeezed but not feel wet or sticky. With your hands, gather the dough and form it into a ball. Flatten the ball into a disk and wrap it in plastic. Chill the dough for 2 hours or up to 2 days before rolling. The dough can also be frozen for up to 2 months; thaw it overnight in the refrigerator before using.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let it sit at room temperature until pliable, 10 to 15 minutes. On a lightly floured surface with a lightly floured rolling pin, roll the dough into a 1/8-inch-thick, 13-inch-diameter round. Be sure to pick up the dough several times and rotate it, re-flouring the surface lightly to prevent sticking. I use a giant spatula or the bottom of a removable-bottom tart pan to move the dough around. (See From Our Test Kitchen, p. 78, for tips on rolling out piecrust.)

Transfer the dough to a 9-inch Pyrex pie pan and trim the edges so there's a 1/2-inch overhang. Fold the overhang underneath itself to create a raised edge and then decoratively crimp or flute the edge. (Save the scraps for patching the shell later, if necessary). Chill until the dough firms up, at least 45 minutes in the refrigerator or 20 minutes in the freezer.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line the pie shell with parchment and fill with dried beans or pie weights. Bake until the edges of the crust are light golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Carefully remove the parchment and beans or weights. If necessary, gently repair any cracks with a smear of the excess dough. Transfer the shell to a rack to cool.

Make the filling: Melt the chocolate and butter in the microwave or in a small metal bowl set in a skillet of barely simmering water, stirring with a rubber spatula until smooth.

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk the eggs, corn syrup, sugar, and salt. Dissolve the instant espresso in 1 Tbs. hot water and add to the egg mixture, along with the coffee liqueur and the melted chocolate and butter. Whisk to blend.

Evenly spread the toasted pecan pieces in the pie shell. To form a decorative border, arrange the pecan halves around the perimeter of the pie shell, on top of the pecan pieces, keeping the points of the pecans facing in and the backs just touching the crust (see photo above). Carefully pour the filling over the pecans until the shell is three-quarters full. Pour the remaining filling into a liquid measuring cup or small pitcher. Transfer the pie to the oven and pour in the remaining filling. (The pecans will rise to the top as the pie bakes.)

Bake the pie until the filling puffs up, just starts to crack, and appears fairly set, 45 to 55 minutes. Transfer it to a rack and allow it to cool completely (at least 4 hours) before serving.

tip: This pie tastes best if cooled and then refrigerated for several hours or overnight. I like to serve it lightly chilled with a dollop of very lightly sweetened whipped cream.

Karen Barker is the pastry chef and co-owner of the award-winning Magnolia Grill restaurant in Durham, North Carolina. ♦

A New Wave of Spinach Salads

Reinvent this classic with bold flavors and crunchy textures from around the world

BY JOANNE WEIR

When was the last time you heard a kid ask for a second helping of spinach? Everyone knows Popeye's favorite green is good for you, but it doesn't win too many popularity contests. And in fairness, when it's overcooked, spinach can acquire a strong, acidic flavor and leave your mouth feeling dry. But if you cook it gently or don't cook it at all, spinach has a clean, delicate flavor altogether contrary to its reputation. So around my house, I fight spinach's bad rap by tossing it in a vibrant salad with lots of tasty toppings and robustly flavored vinaigrettes.

The classic salad with eggs and bacon is delicious, of course (you'll find my version on p. 67), but I like to pique my diners' interest with fresh new twists, incorporating eclectic flavors and textures from international cuisines ranging from Italian to Asian to Indian. Take my Italian-inspired salad, for instance: I toss the spinach with sautéed mushrooms and Parmigiano and arrange everything on top of garlic-rubbed crostini, so it's more like a spinach-salad bruschetta. Heady Indian spices like curry powder and ground cumin add zip to a salad with apples and dried apricots. And I whisk together a vinaigrette of rice vinegar, soy sauce, sesame oil, and fresh ginger



Fresh Asian accents



Inspired by Italy



Bold Indian flavors



Classic flavors

to give a zesty Asian accent to a spinach salad with chicken and cashews.

Texture is as important as flavor. In my salads, I always add at least one ingredient that has a bit of crunch to create some textural contrast. Here, too, I like to span the globe and think beyond toasted nuts and croutons. Crispy pappadams (Indian flatbreads), fried wonton wrappers, and even fried Asian noodles are all great crunchy additions that help give a global flair and a little sophistication to my spinach salads.

Start with fresh, clean, dry spinach. At the market you can usually choose among large bundled spinach, bulk young spinach, or washed and bagged (or boxed) baby spinach. I prefer bundled young spinach because it tends to be more tender and have a cleaner flavor than the large, tough leaves—and it's not as dirty. Bagged spinach is convenient and works fine, but it can be hard to assess how fresh it is, so it generally doesn't last as long, unless you luck out on a really fresh batch. No matter what kind of spinach you buy, make sure you wash it carefully to remove all the dirt (I give even bagged spinach a rinse) and dry it thoroughly, since oil-based dressings don't cling well to wet leaves.



Asian

Spinach Salad with Chicken, Cashews, Ginger & Fried Wontons

Serves six as a first course, four as a main course.

Instead of cooking chicken breasts, you can use leftover roasted or rotisserie chicken. You'll need 3½ cups.

FOR THE VINAIGRETTE:

2 Tbs. rice vinegar
1 Tbs. soy sauce
1 Tbs. peanut oil
2 tsp. finely grated or minced fresh ginger
1 tsp. granulated sugar
1 tsp. Asian sesame oil
1 medium clove garlic, minced (1 tsp.)
Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE CHICKEN:

1 Tbs. peanut oil
3 bone-in, skin-on split chicken breasts (about 1 lb. total)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SALAD:

½ cup cashew pieces (about 3 oz.)
1½ cups peanut oil
2 oz. wonton wrappers (about 8 wrappers), cut into ½-inch strips
10 cups loosely packed baby spinach leaves, washed and dried (about 10 oz.)
2 scallions, thinly sliced on the diagonal

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

Make the vinaigrette: In a small bowl, whisk together the vinaigrette ingredients, seasoning to taste with the salt and pepper.

Cook the chicken: Heat the peanut oil in an ovenproof 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Generously season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper. When the oil is shimmering, add the chicken breasts skin side down and cook until light golden, 1 to 2 minutes. Turn the chicken breasts so they are skin side up and transfer the pan to the oven. Bake until the chicken is just cooked through, 12 to 14 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a cutting board and let cool. Remove and discard the

skin and bones. Cut each breast diagonally into thin slices and set aside.

Make the salad: While the chicken cools, scatter the cashews on a baking sheet and bake in the oven until golden and fragrant, 7 to 9 minutes. Let cool.

Pour the peanut oil into a small saucepan and heat over medium-high heat until the oil reaches 375°F. Use a candy thermometer to monitor the temperature, or test the oil temperature by dipping the end of one wonton strip into the oil. If it's hot enough, it should sizzle on contact.

Fry half of the strips until light golden, 30 to 60 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Season with a light sprinkle of salt. Fry the remaining wonton strips, drain, and season with salt. (The wontons can be fried up to 2 hours ahead.)

In a large bowl, toss the vinaigrette with the spinach, chicken, and scallions and season to taste with salt. Divide the salad among four or six plates, garnish each with the fried wontons and cashews, and serve immediately.



Italian

Garlic Crostini with Spinach, Mushroom & Parmigiano Salad

Serves six as a first course, four as a main course.

FOR THE VINAIGRETTE:

2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
 (from about half a lemon)
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
 (from about half a lemon)
1 small shallot, minced (1½ Tbs.)
1 medium clove garlic, minced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SALAD & CROSTINI:

Six ½-inch-thick slices coarse-textured Tuscan-style bread
2 cloves garlic, cut in half lengthwise
Kosher salt
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for drizzling
10 oz. small fresh button mushrooms, stems discarded, caps halved (about 2½ cups)
Freshly ground black pepper
6 cups loosely packed baby spinach leaves, washed and dried (about 6 oz.)
Parmigiano-Reggiano for shaving

Make the vinaigrette: In a small bowl, whisk together the vinaigrette ingredients, seasoning to taste with the salt and pepper.

Make the salad: Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high. Arrange the bread slices on a baking sheet and broil until crispy and light golden on top, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip and broil the other sides until golden, about 1 minute. Rub one side of the toasted bread with the cut sides of the garlic. Sprinkle each slice with a small pinch of salt and set aside.

Heat the oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is shimmering, add the mushrooms and stir to coat in the oil. Let the mushrooms cook undisturbed until the liquid they release evaporates and they're deep golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Sprinkle with ½ tsp. salt, stir, and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until most sides are nicely browned, 3 to 5 minutes more. Season to taste with more salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

Toss the spinach and vinaigrette in a large bowl. Put the bread slices on four or six plates and drizzle each slice with a little olive oil. Divide the spinach among the plates, arranging it on the top of the bread but leaving part of the bread exposed. Top with the mushrooms. Using a cheese shaver or vegetable peeler, shave a few thin slivers of Parmigiano over the top. Serve immediately.



Indian

Spinach Salad with Apples, Dried Apricots & Pappadam Croutons

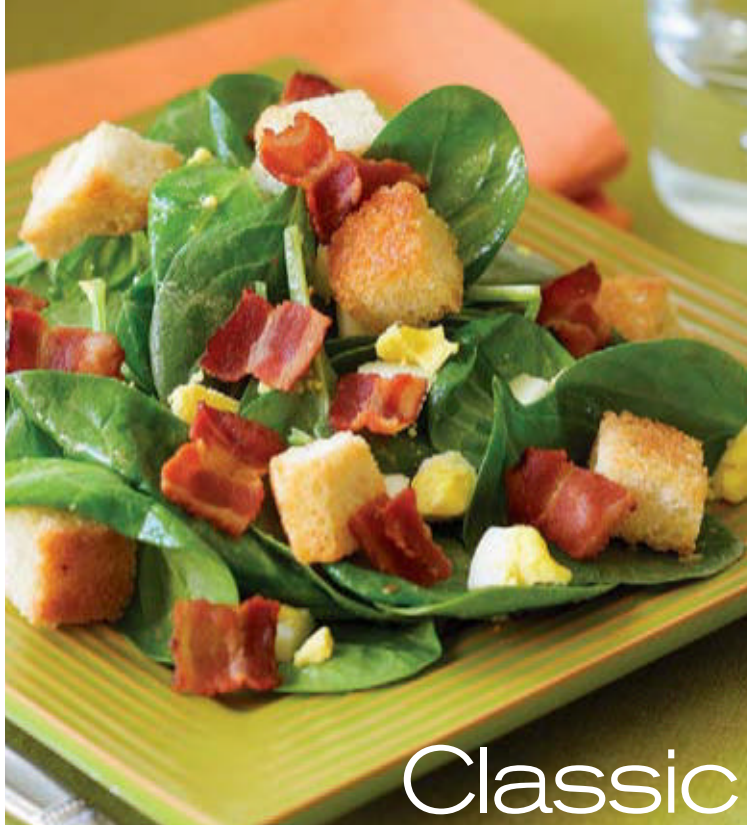
Serves six as a first course, four as a main course.

FOR THE VINAIGRETTE:

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp. curry powder
¼ tsp. ground cumin
1 medium clove garlic, minced (about 1 tsp.)
2½ Tbs. fresh lemon juice (from 1 large lemon)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SALAD:

½ cup whole almonds (about 3 oz.)
Four 7-inch round plain, cumin-seed, or black-peppercorn pappadams (see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 78, for more information)



tip: When buying spinach, look for leaves that are uniformly green and crisp. Avoid those that are wilted, excessively wet, or yellowed. Fresh spinach can be quite gritty, especially the larger bundled leaves, so wash it very carefully.

10 cups loosely packed baby spinach leaves, washed and dried (about 10 oz.)

1 small red apple (preferably Gala, Cortland, or McIntosh), cored and thinly sliced

1 small tart green apple (preferably Granny Smith or Pippin), cored and thinly sliced

¾ cup dried apricots (about 5 oz.), thinly sliced

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

Make the vinaigrette: In a small saucepan or skillet, heat the olive oil, curry powder, cumin, and garlic over medium-low heat until sizzling and very fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Set aside until cool. Whisk in the lemon juice and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Make the salad: Scatter the almonds on a baking sheet and bake in the oven until lightly browned and fragrant, 8 to 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool. Chop coarsely.

Turn off the oven, position a rack 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high. Arrange the pappadams in a single layer on a baking sheet and broil until they bubble and crisp on one side, 15 to 30 seconds. Don't let them take on more than a light golden color. Turn the pappadams over and continue to broil until bubbly and crisp on the other side, about 5 seconds. Remove from the oven and let cool—they will continue to crisp. Break each pappadam into several pieces.

In a large bowl, toss the spinach, apples, apricots, and almonds with enough of the dressing to coat lightly. Divide the salad among four or six plates, garnish with the pappadam pieces, and serve immediately.

Warm Spinach Salad with Eggs, Bacon & Croutons

Serves six as a first course, four as a main course.

2 large eggs

Kosher salt

4½ Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

2 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled

3 to 4 oz. rustic, coarse-textured bread, crust removed, cut into ¾-inch cubes (to yield 3 cups)

3 Tbs. sherry vinegar

1 Tbs. Dijon mustard

Freshly ground black pepper

3 slices bacon, cut into ¾-inch squares

1 small shallot, minced (1½ Tbs.)

10 cups loosely packed baby spinach leaves, washed and dried (about 10 oz.)

Put the eggs in a small saucepan of water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Boil for 4 minutes. Turn off the heat and let cool in the water. When the eggs are cool, crack and peel them. Chop the eggs, season to taste with salt, and reserve.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. Heat 1½ Tbs. of the olive oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until it starts to turn gold, about 1 minute. Discard the garlic.

Arrange the bread in a single layer on a baking sheet. Drizzle with the garlic-infused oil, sprinkle with a little salt, and toss. Bake, shaking the bread cubes once, until golden and crispy, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool.

In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining 3 Tbs. olive oil, the sherry vinegar, and the mustard. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

In a 10-inch skillet, cook the bacon over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown and crisp, 3 to 5 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a plate lined with paper towels. Add the shallot to the pan and cook, stirring, until softened, about 1 minute. Let the pan cool slightly and add the vinaigrette to the pan, whisking well to blend the ingredients.

Toss the warm vinaigrette and the spinach together in a large bowl. Transfer to a platter and garnish with the chopped eggs, bacon, and croutons. Serve immediately.

Joanne Weir is a cooking teacher, cookbook author, and star of the PBS show Joanne Weir's Cooking Class. ♦

Linguine with Clam Sauce

Fresh clams and perfectly firm pasta are the keys to this simple Italian dish

BY PERLA MEYERS

If you've ever ordered a plate of linguine with clam sauce in Naples, Venice, or any Italian town overlooking the Mediterranean, you're surely a fan of this simple dish, with its intense, clean flavors. But return home and start to look for this classic in local restaurants and, like me, you're apt to be disappointed.

Linguine with clam sauce should be packed with flavor—nicely garlicky and a little spicy—with firm (but not chewy) pasta. Most of all, it should taste of fresh, delicious clams with the unmistakable tang of the sea. This is a simple dish, with familiar ingredients that are easy to find. Yet the simpler the dish, the harder it is to duplicate, because every ingredient has to be perfectly fresh and properly prepared. This is not the place for short cuts. But don't worry—I'll help you recreate the best linguine with clam sauce you've ever had.

Start with selecting the clams (see sidebar at right). The ones used in Italy and around the Mediterranean are small, meaty, and juicy, but this variety is not available in the United States. You're most likely to find Atlantic hard-shell clams in your market. The smallest of these, generally less than 2½ inches across, are called littlenecks, and

they are the tenderest. Medium ones, up to 3 inches across, are called cherrystones. The largest quahogs, called chowder clams, are too tough for this sauce. When making this dish for two to four people, I use the more expensive littlenecks, but when I plan to serve six or eight, I choose cherrystones because they're large, and each clam goes a long way.

Next, choose a brand of pasta that will remain al dente. I prefer the imported De Cecco, Rustichella d'Abruzzo, and Due Pastori brands. These take longer to cook but will retain a firm texture. The pasta water is very flavorful, so be sure to save some before draining the pasta. If you find yourself with too little clam juice, add about ½ cup of this reserved cooking water to the broth.

To ensure heat in every bite, I infuse olive oil with crushed red pepper flakes. Don't skip this simple, fast step, as it imparts a subtle spiciness throughout the dish.

This is a great classic that should be cooked and enjoyed for what it is. If it can make you feel as if you're eating at a seaside restaurant in Italy, so much the better.

Buying clams

When shopping for clams, you'll want to head for a market with rapid turnover. Since clams are such an important part of this dish, it'll be worth the extra time it takes to get to a good seafood market.

Look for intact, tightly closed (or just slightly gaping) shells, and a sea-like smell. Clams are sold alive, so don't store them in plastic or they'll suffocate. As soon as you get home, put them in a bowl, cover with a wet towel, and refrigerate. Just before cooking, look for any shellfish that are open and tap them on the counter. If they don't close, discard them. Also discard any clams that remain closed after cooking.

If you are not preparing this dish the day you buy the clams, it's smart to wash and cook them in the wine and herb broth, remove them from their shells, and refrigerate; they will keep for two or three days.





Linguine with Clam Sauce

Serves two to three.

24 littleneck clams
6 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
⅓ cup dry white wine
5 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus a few whole leaves for garnish
3 large cloves garlic, minced
Kosher salt
8 oz. linguine or spaghetti (I like De Cecco, Due Pastori, and Rustichella d'Abruzzo brands)
Freshly ground black pepper

Scrub the clams under cold water and set aside. In a heavy 3-qt. saucepan, heat 3 Tbs. of the oil over medium heat. Add the pepper flakes and cook briefly to infuse the oil, about 20 seconds. Immediately add the wine, 2 Tbs. of the chopped parsley, and half of the minced garlic. Cook for 20 seconds and add the clams.

Cover and cook over medium-high heat, checking every 2 minutes and removing each clam as it opens. It will take 5 to 6 minutes total for all the clams to open. Transfer the clams to a cutting board and reserve the broth. Remove the clams from the shells

and cut them in half, or quarters if they're large. Return the clams to the broth. Discard the shells.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook until it's almost al dente, 6 to 9 minutes. Don't overcook.

While the pasta is cooking, heat the remaining 3 Tbs. olive oil in a 10- or 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the remaining 3 Tbs. chopped parsley and the rest of the garlic and cook until the garlic is just soft, about 1 minute. Set the skillet aside.

When the pasta is done, reserve about ¼ cup of the pasta

cooking water and then drain the pasta. Add the pasta, the clams, and the broth the clams were cooked in to the skillet. Return to low heat, toss the pasta in the sauce, and simmer for another minute to finish cooking it, adding a little of the pasta water if you prefer a wetter dish.

Taste for salt and add a large grind of black pepper. Serve immediately, garnished with the parsley leaves.

Perla Meyers teaches cooking at workshops around the country and has cooked in restaurants throughout Italy, France, and Spain. ♦

how to make

Cinnamon Buns In Less Than an Hour





A biscuit dough is the shortcut secret to this sweet breakfast treat

BY KATHY KINGSLEY

If I could order up the perfect breakfast, it would definitely include warm, homemade cinnamon rolls swirled with a spiced filling and drizzled with a sweet white icing. As much as I love these rich, fragrant buns, I often don't have the time or haven't planned far enough in advance to make the yeast-leavened dough called for in most recipes. But several years ago, I discovered a shortcut method that makes light, tender buns in about 45 minutes—no lie.

The idea came to me during the time I owned and operated a bakery in Connecticut called Great Cakes. Our famous yeast-risen cinnamon rolls sold out quickly every Sunday morning, and week after week, we continued to get special orders for these delectable treats. One Sunday, after all the buns had been sold, I was baking biscuits and used some of the dough to make an impromptu cinnamon bun—we were always experimenting with new methods. It worked, but it wasn't great. That's when I began tinkering with the ingredients to see if I could come up with a biscuit-type dough that would work for a quick cinnamon bun.

I started with traditional biscuit dough, which contains flour, buttermilk, cold butter, and baking powder. After much experimentation, I increased the amount of butter in the original recipe to give the dough more flavor and a softer texture. I also added cottage cheese, which I had read is sometimes used in German baking recipes to make richer and more tender pastries. Increasing the amount of the baking powder made the buns rise more—I like them puffy. The baking powder also reacts with the buttermilk to neutralize its sourness. Rolling the dough and shaping it into pinwheel spirals proved easy, and the resulting buns were tender, golden, and flavorful, with a filling redolent of cinnamon and not overly sweet. And because I can't help trying out new variations, I came up with a version with an apple-butter filling. (For yet another variation, go to FineCooking.com for Coconut Almond Spice Buns.)

With this recipe, you won't need a lot of time, and you won't have to plan ahead to enjoy warm, homemade cinnamon buns—now that's a real breakfast treat, indeed.

reader review

A *Fine Cooking* reader gave both versions of the Fastest Cinnamon Buns a real-world test. Here are the results:

This was a great recipe for me to try, because it brought me out of my comfort zone. But the instructions were very clear, and both versions of the recipe came out perfectly—and looked just like the photos. Plus, baking these buns made the house smell wonderful.

—Jill Caseria
Newtown, Connecticut

Fastest Cinnamon Buns

Yields 12 buns.

Cooking spray for the pan

FOR THE DOUGH:

¾ cup cottage cheese
(4% milk fat)
⅓ cup buttermilk
¼ cup granulated sugar
2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter,
melted
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached
all-purpose flour; more
for rolling
1 Tbs. baking powder
½ tsp. table salt
¼ tsp. baking soda

FOR THE FILLING:

¾ oz. (1½ Tbs.) unsalted
butter, melted
⅔ cup packed light or dark
brown sugar
1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground allspice
¼ tsp. ground cloves
1 cup (4 oz.) chopped pecans

FOR THE GLAZE:

2½ oz. (scant ⅔ cup)
confectioners' sugar
2 to 3 Tbs. cold whole or
low-fat milk
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Heat the oven to 400°F. Grease the sides and bottom of a 9- or 10-inch springform pan with cooking spray.

Make the dough: **1** In a food processor, combine the cottage cheese, buttermilk, sugar, melted butter, and vanilla. Process until smooth, about 10 seconds. Add the flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda and pulse in short bursts just until the dough clumps together (don't overprocess). The dough will be soft and moist.

Scrape the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead it with floured hands 4 or 5 times until smooth. With a rolling pin, roll the dough into a 12x15-inch rectangle.

Make the filling: Brush the dough with the melted butter, leaving a ½-inch border unbuttered around the edges. In a medium bowl, combine the brown sugar, cinnamon, all-

spice, and cloves. Sprinkle the mixture over the buttered area of the dough and pat gently into the surface. Sprinkle the nuts over the sugar mixture.

2 Starting at a long edge, roll up the dough jelly-roll style. Pinch the seam to seal, and leave the ends open.

3 With a sharp knife, cut the roll into 12 equal pieces. Set the pieces, cut side up, in the prepared pan; they should fill the pan and touch slightly, but don't worry if there are small gaps.

Bake until golden brown and firm to the touch, 20 to 28 minutes. Set the pan on a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes. Run a spatula around the inside edge of the pan and remove the springform ring. Transfer the rolls to a serving plate.

Make the glaze: **4** In a small bowl, mix the confectioners' sugar, 2 Tbs. milk, and vanilla to make a smooth glaze. It should have a thick but pourable consistency, so add up to 1 Tbs. more milk if necessary. Drizzle the glaze over the rolls. Let stand 15 minutes and serve.

Variation:

Apple-Butter Cinnamon Buns

Instead of using the cinnamon-pecan filling in the main recipe, mix ¾ cup apple butter, 1½ Tbs. melted butter, and 1 tsp. ground cinnamon in a small bowl. Omit the melted butter from the main recipe and spread the dough rectangle with the apple mixture, leaving a ½-inch border around the edges. Sprinkle with ¾ cup (3 oz.) finely chopped walnuts, if desired. Roll, cut, bake, and ice as directed. Because this filling is wetter, the buns may need to bake for 30 minutes.

Kathy Kingsley has been baking for two decades. Her latest cookbook is Chocolate Therapy. ♦



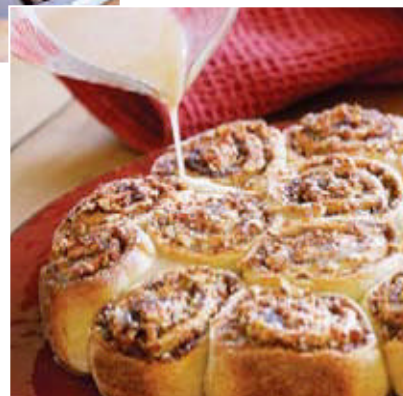
1. Don't overprocess the dough, but be sure the cottage cheese is fully incorporated.



2. Leave a ½-inch border around the edge of the dough, so the filling won't spill out when you roll it up.



3. The buns will probably fill the pan, but don't worry if there are small gaps between them. The buns will rise and spread as they bake.



4. Make the glaze pourable so that it can seep down into each bun and infuse it with sweet vanilla goodness.

tip: For an extra-sweet touch, reserve some of the glaze to pass at the table, so people can drizzle a little more on each bun.

How to Make Hearty Bean & Vegetable Soups

BY MOLLY STEVENS

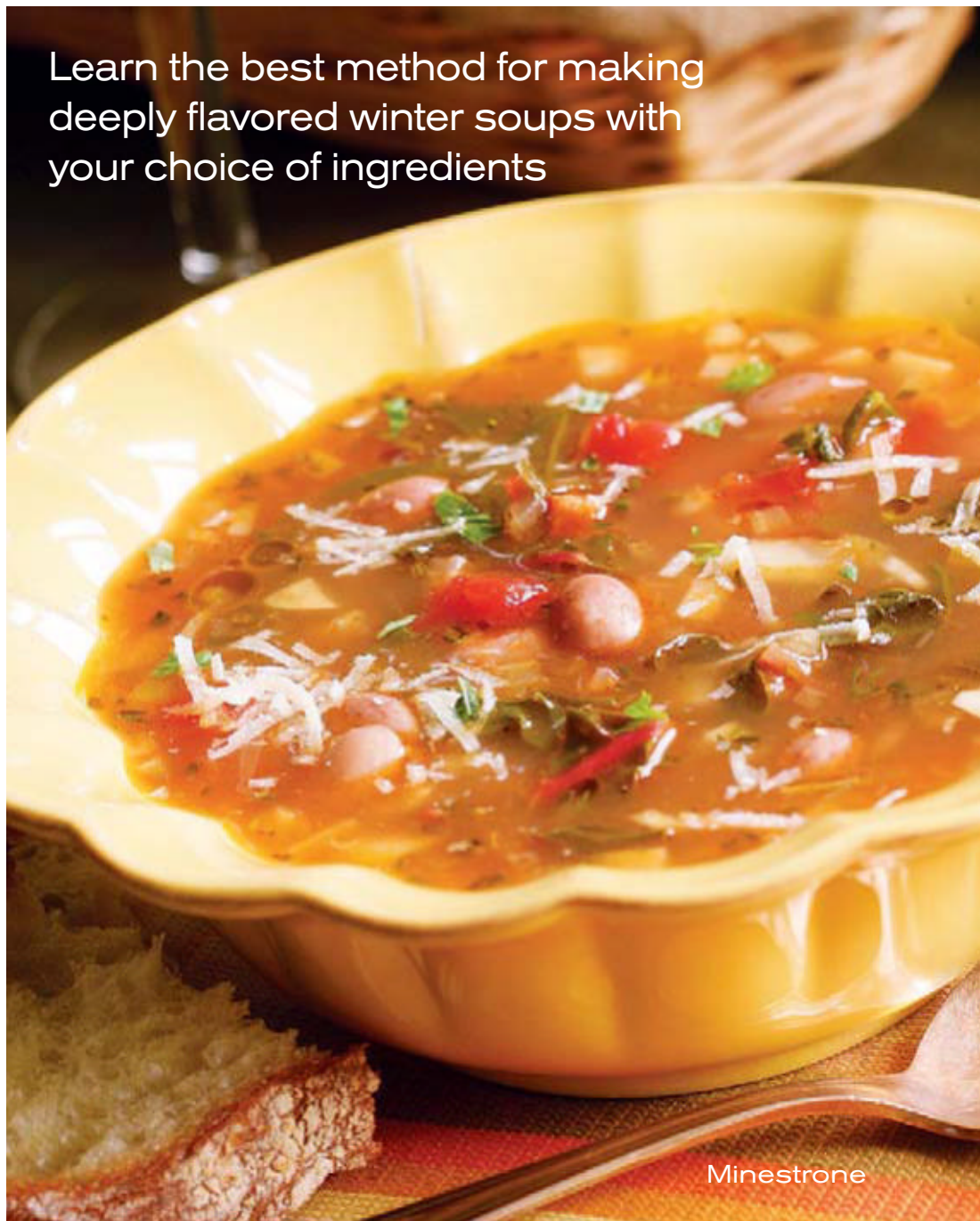
Every fall my soup pot gets a workout. But of all the soups and stews I concoct to keep my friends and family warm, everyone's favorites are the hearty bean and vegetable soups. Endlessly variable, this winning combination delivers delicious, nourishing soups that please almost any appetite. And happily for me, they're easy on the cook, too. The straightforward method on pp. 75–77 shows you how to make a satisfying bean soup using ingredients you like. Beans' gentle, earthy character makes them a perfect backdrop for a range of flavors, from bold and spicy to rich and mellow. So by simply varying the ingredients, you can create a winter's worth of comforting soups.

Another reason to add bean and vegetable soups to your repertoire is convenience. Make a big pot on the weekend (they take some time, but it's mostly unattended simmering), then refrigerate the leftovers and reheat them for easy meals throughout the week. Like many slow-cooked dishes, these soups taste even better the next day or the day after that. And you can easily freeze them for longer storage.

The best soups start with dried beans

Certainly canned beans speed up the process, but this is one of those instances where the extra step of starting with dried beans makes a big difference. First of all, they yield better flavor and texture: Freshly cooked beans are plumper, creamier, and truer to their natural flavor than canned. Dried beans also retain their shape better and are less apt to turn mushy. Another advantage of cooking your own beans is that you end up with a rich-tasting bean broth that goes right back into the soup.

Learn the best method for making deeply flavored winter soups with your choice of ingredients



Minestrone

Soak the beans first. This allows them to soften gently and plump up, shortening the cooking time and helping the beans cook evenly. Although many recipes call for soaking beans overnight, four hours is plenty. I often soak the beans in the morning of the day I plan to make soup.

Next, cook the beans alone. Give the beans a quick rinse, put them in a large pot with a garlic clove and bay leaf for extra flavor, and simmer gently in enough water to cover. I've found that it's best to add salt about three-quarters of the way through simmering. This is not so early as to slow down the cooking (which salt is known to do), but not too late to season the beans effectively. Instead of adding vegetables to the simmering beans, I prefer to cook the beans separately and add them to the soup later. If you cook them together, it's easy for the vegetables to overcook before the beans are ready.

Choose any vegetables and seasonings you like

It's always a good idea to think of flavor affinities before you start assembling ingredients. If you're leaning toward Mediterranean, you might select fennel, rosemary, and garlic, while a Latin American-inspired soup could include cumin, coriander, and chiles (see some of my favorite combinations at right). I also like to keep things seasonal, relying on the hearty vegetables available in fall and winter, such as cabbage, parsnips, carrots, and cauliflower.

No matter what type of soup I make, I find that a bit of cured or seasoned pork (such as bacon, pancetta, or sausage), while not absolutely necessary, adds depth and an irresistibly savory edge to the soup. I cook it in a little olive oil to create a flavor base. Then I remove it, set it aside to add back later, and add the aromatics followed by the vegetables and broth.

Finish with a flourish. After you've added the beans back to the soup pot and let everything simmer together, you have a final opportunity to personalize and add flavor to your soup. Stir in some lemon juice, vinegar, or hot sauce for a splash of acidity or heat. For a burst of freshness and color, toss in a handful of chopped herbs. And if you like, finish each serving with a drizzle of good olive oil or flavored oil, a handful of croutons, or even a sprinkling of grated cheese.



French farmers' soup

Classic combinations

Try one of these traditional combos or create your own hearty soup following the steps starting on the next page.

MEXICAN BLACK BEAN SOUP

Beans: black beans

Meat: chorizo or bacon

Aromatics: onion and celery

Seasonings: garlic, jalapeño, cumin, and coriander

Vegetables: carrots and tomatoes

Finishing touches: lime juice and fresh cilantro

MIDDLE-EASTERN CHICKPEA SOUP

Beans: chickpeas

Meat: omit

Aromatics: onions and celery

Seasonings: garlic, cumin, coriander, and red pepper flakes

Vegetables: potatoes, cauliflower, and carrots

Finishing touches: lemon juice, parsley, and a drizzle of chile oil

FRENCH FARMERS' SOUP

Beans: flageolets or baby lima beans

Meat: bacon

Aromatics: shallots and leeks

Seasonings: thyme

Vegetables: carrots, celery root, and turnips

Finishing touches: white-wine or

Champagne vinegar, parsley, and croutons

CABBAGE AND WHITE BEAN SOUP

Beans: cannellini, great northern, or navy beans

Meat: fresh Italian sausage

Aromatics: onion and celery

Seasonings: rosemary and garlic

Vegetables: cabbage and potatoes

Finishing touches: parsley

MINISTRONE

Beans: cranberry beans

Meat: pancetta

Aromatics: onion and celery

Seasonings: garlic, rosemary, thyme, red pepper flakes, and tomato paste

Vegetables: chard or escarole, fennel, and tomatoes

Finishing touches: basil, grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, and a drizzle of olive oil

Six steps to a hearty bean & vegetable soup

Yields 9 to 10 cups; serves six.

What you'll need

Read carefully through all the steps and then choose and assemble the ingredients for each step before you start cooking.

8 oz. (1¼ cups) your choice of dried beans

1 medium clove garlic

1 bay leaf

¾ tsp. kosher salt; more as needed

2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil or unsalted butter

¼ lb. bacon, pancetta, or sausage (optional)

1½ cups your choice of aromatics

4 tsp. your choice of spices and herbs or other seasonings

1 Tbs. tomato paste (optional)

3 cups your choice of vegetables

5 to 6 cups homemade or store-bought low-salt chicken broth or homemade vegetable broth

Freshly ground black pepper

Your choice of finishing ingredients (see step 6)

Quick-soak beans

Don't have at least four hours to soak beans? You can quick-soak them. In a saucepan, add enough cold water to cover the beans by 2 inches, bring quickly to a boil, remove from the heat, and let soak for one hour. The results tend to be less consistent than those you'd get from a cold-water soak, but it's a good trick in a pinch.

1 Soak the beans

Sort through your beans, discarding any little stones or clumps of dirt, and then give them a quick rinse. Transfer to a large bowl, add enough cold water to cover the beans by 3 inches, and soak for 4 to 12 hours.

Dried bean choices

Choose one (1¼ cups; 8 oz.)

Baby lima beans

Black beans (turtle beans)

Cannellini

Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)

Cranberry beans (borlotti or Roman beans)

Flageolets

Great northern beans

Kidney beans (red, pink, or white)

Navy beans

Pinto beans

Yellow-eye beans

Substituting canned beans

If you don't have time to soak and cook the beans, you can use canned beans, though the flavor of your soup won't be as rich. You'll need two 15-ounce cans to make the 3 cups cooked beans needed (you may have leftover beans). Rinse and drain before using.

2 Cook the beans

Drain and rinse the beans and transfer them to a 3- or 4-qt. saucepan. Add 1 medium garlic clove (smashed and peeled), 1 bay leaf, and 6 cups of cold water. Partially cover to limit evaporation and simmer gently, stirring every 20 to 30 minutes, until the beans are tender and almost creamy inside, without being mealy or mushy (see below for approximate cooking times). The beans' cooking time will vary depending on how long they've



soaked and how old they are. The older the beans, the longer they take to cook. But the longer you soak them, the shorter the cooking time. So the safest way to determine when the beans are done is to taste them as they cook.

Season with ¾ tsp. kosher salt when the beans are about three-quarters done. If at any time the liquid doesn't cover the beans, add 1 cup fresh water.

Drain the beans, reserving the cooking liquid, and discard the bay leaf (the garlic clove can stay). If you cook the beans in advance, refrigerate the beans and the cooking liquid separately until you make the soup (you can cook the beans one day ahead).

BEAN COOKING TIMES

(Times are approximate.)

Baby lima, flageolet, yellow-eye:

¾ to 1 hour

Black, cannellini, cranberry, great northern, kidney, navy, pinto:

1 to 1½ hours

Chickpeas: 1¼ to 2 hours

3 Create the flavor foundation

This important step consists of three consecutive sub-steps that create the soup's flavor base.

Heat 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil or unsalted butter in a 4- to 5-qt. soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat.

Add the meat

(optional; see choices below)

To give the soup a more savory, meaty flavor add some bacon (or pancetta) or fresh (or smoked) sausage. Cook, stirring often, until the fat is rendered

and the meat begins to brown, 5 to 8 minutes. Pour the meat and fat into a small strainer set over a bowl, and set the meat aside. Spoon 2 Tbs. of fat back into the pot, and return it to medium heat. If you're not using any meat, skip to the aromatics.

Add aromatics

(see choices below)

Add your choice of aromatics and season with a pinch of kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Cook, stirring frequently, until they begin to soften but not brown, 4 to 6 minutes.

Add seasonings

(see choices below)

Stir in your choice of seasonings and cook until fragrant, 1 minute.

By simply varying the ingredients, you can create a winter's worth of comforting soups.



Meat choices (optional)

Choose one (1/4 lb.)

Bacon or thinly sliced pancetta: cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Bulk pancetta: cut into small dice

Fresh Italian sausage or fresh chorizo: out of its casing and crumbled

Smoked or cured sausage (such as andouille, chorizo, or kielbasa): cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Aromatic choices

Choose at least two and up to four in any combination, for a total of 1 1/2 cups

Celery: chopped

Leeks: chopped

Onions: chopped

Shallots: chopped

Tomato paste

Some of the pink and red beans can turn a muddy shade when cooked, but you can add 1 Tbs. tomato paste along with the seasonings (at right) to deepen the shade and make it more appealing. Tomato paste also adds a concentrated sweetness welcome in any bean soup, not just those made with dark beans.

Seasoning choices

HERBS & OTHER SEASONINGS

Choose up to three for a total of 1 Tbs., unless otherwise noted:

Dried herbes de

Provence (no more than 3/4 tsp.)

Fresh chiles: minced

Fresh garlic: minced

Fresh ginger: minced

Fresh marjoram: chopped

Fresh rosemary: chopped

Fresh sage: chopped

Fresh thyme: chopped

SPICES

Choose up to three for a total of 1 tsp., unless otherwise noted:

Crushed red pepper flakes (no more than 1/4 tsp.)

Ground coriander

Ground cumin

Ground fennel seed

Hot or sweet paprika (smoked or plain)

4 Add vegetables & broth

Add the vegetables, stirring to incorporate with the seasonings and aromatics, and then add 2 cups of the broth, partially cover, and simmer until the vegetables are just barely tender, 10 to 20 minutes.

Vegetable choices

Choose up to three for a total of 3 cups

Canned diced tomatoes: drained (save the juice to add to the broth)

Carrots: peeled and cut into 1/4-inch-thick half moons

Cauliflower: cut into 1/2-inch florets

Celery root: peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice

Escarole: coarsely chopped

Fennel: coarsely chopped

Green cabbage: thinly sliced

Parsnips: peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice

Red or white potatoes: peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice

Swiss chard: stems chopped and leaves sliced

Turnips: peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice

Broth choices

Choose one (5 to 6 cups, added in two steps)

Homemade or store-bought low-salt chicken broth

Homemade vegetable broth

5 Add beans & more liquid

Add the beans and then add 3 cups of chicken or vegetable broth and 1 cup of the reserved bean-cooking liquid. If you have less than 1 cup bean liquid left from cooking the beans or if you're adding the juice from canned tomatoes, adjust the broth for a total of 4 cups liquid.

Return the cooked meat to the pot, if using. Stir to combine and simmer, partially covered, for 10 minutes to meld the flavors.



6 Give the soup a finishing touch

Taste the soup and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Finish your soup with an acid, if it needs brightening, a sprinkle of fresh herbs, and a final topping once the soup is ladled into bowls. You may want to reserve some of the herbs to sprinkle on top of each serving as well. The soup will keep in the fridge for three or four days, tightly covered. Or you can freeze it for up to three months. (If making ahead, wait to add the finishing touches until ready to serve.)

Finishing choices (optional)

ACIDS (optional)

Choose one (1 to 2 tsp.):

Fresh lemon or lime juice

Hot sauce: just a splash

Red-wine, white-wine, sherry, or Champagne vinegar

FRESH HERBS

Choose up to two for a total of 1/3 cup:

Basil: chopped

Chives: thinly sliced

Cilantro: chopped

Parsley: chopped

TOPPINGS

A drizzle of good-quality olive oil, toasted sesame oil, chile oil, or herb-infused oil per serving

A small handful of croutons per serving

1 Tbs. freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano per serving

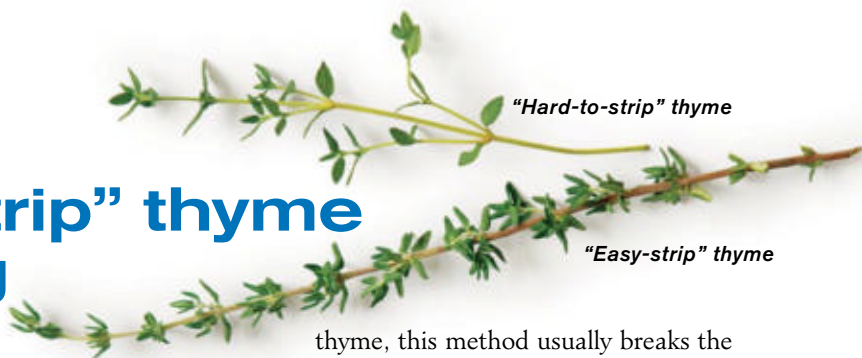
Choose “easy-strip” thyme for faster picking

If you asked me to choose my least favorite kitchen task, I wouldn't have to think hard—as much as I love the flavor, the tediousness of picking little fresh thyme leaves off their stems drives me crazy. So when I discovered that our Thanksgiving menu calls for about ½ cup of chopped thyme, I wasn't too happy. Fortunately, our test kitchen intern, Will, returned from the store with beautiful bunches of what I like to call “easy-strip” thyme.

Let me explain: There are many varieties of thyme. Besides their flavor differences, some varieties have thin, weak stems; some have tough, woody stems; and still other varieties have both—the mature stems are woody while the new growth is weak. The fastest way to strip thyme leaves off the stem is to pinch the end of the stem and zip your fingers down the stem, pulling off the leaves in one fell swoop. With thin-stemmed

thyme, this method usually breaks the stem and you practically have to pick the leaves off one by one, but with woody-stemmed varieties—easy-strip thyme—it works like a charm.

So the next time you buy thyme, choose the woodiest-looking bunch (it's not actually labeled “easy-strip”—that's just what I call it). When zip-stripping the thyme, start at the top end for a single sprig, and the bottom end for a multibranched sprig.



Pineapple Rings 1-2-3

The easiest way to prepare the glistening, caramelized fresh pineapple rings that top our Pecan Pineapple Upside-Down Cake on p. 60 is to buy a peeled and cored fresh pineapple from the grocery store and just slice it into rings. But if your market carries only whole fresh pineapples, here's how to trim one down into picture-perfect rings.

How to select a ripe pineapple

Look for a fresh, dark-green top and taut, shiny skin. Pick it up. It should feel heavy for its size and give a little when pressed, but there shouldn't be any large, very soft spots. It should have a light, sweet pineapple fragrance, especially at its base. A pineapple with a heavy, cloying fragrance may be overripe.

Contrary to popular belief, a pineapple with greenish skin may actually be ripe; skin color varies with variety. You may also have heard that the ease with which a leaf can be pulled free is a sign of ripeness, but this isn't necessarily so.

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BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT



1 Cut off the top and bottom and stand it on a cut end. Slice off the skin, cutting deeply enough into the pineapple to remove the eyes, too. You'll lose some edible flesh this way, but it's the best way to get nice round rings.



2 Cut the pineapple into ¼-inch-thick slices and then trim any pointy edges off each slice to round it off.

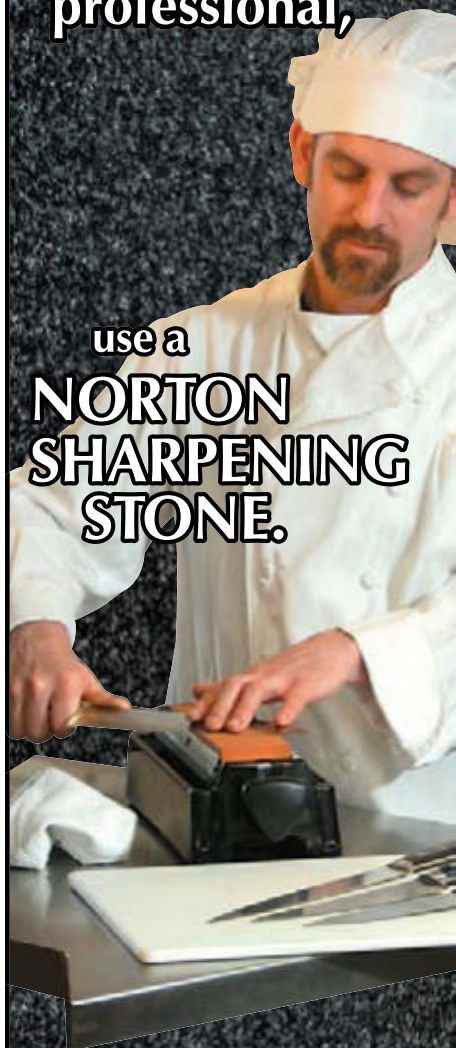


3 Remove the core from each slice with a small round cutter or a paring knife.

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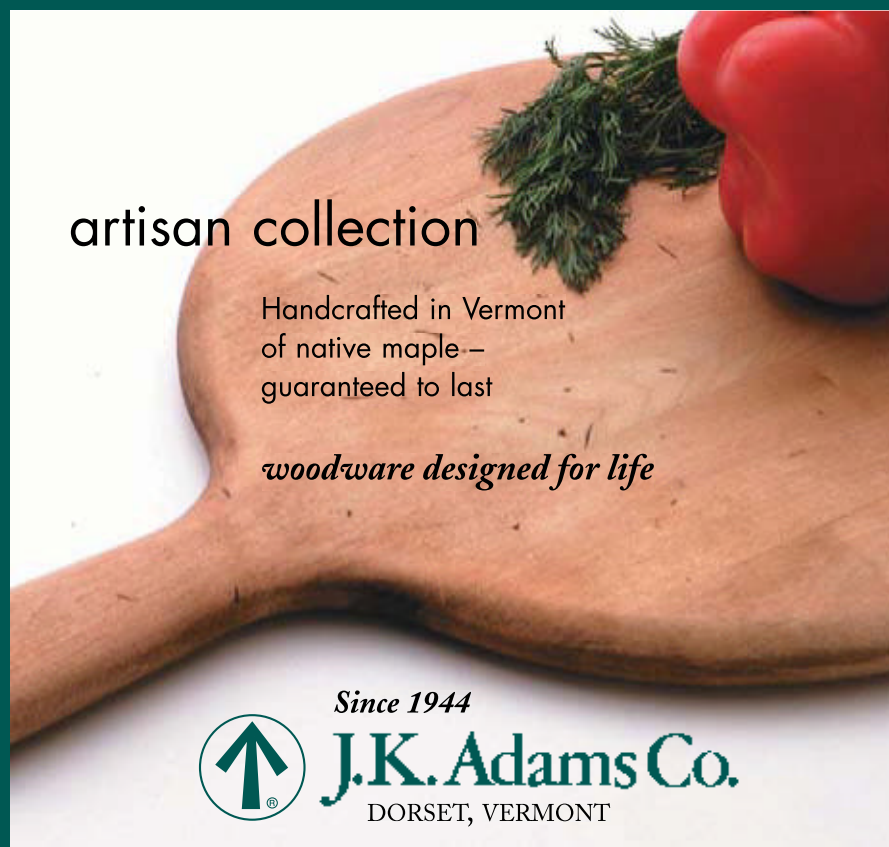
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There's no substitute for freshly grated nutmeg

Good cooks know there's a big difference between freshly ground spices and their pre-ground counterparts, and this is particularly true in the case of nutmeg. See for yourself: Open the jar of ground nutmeg that's probably in your cupboard (and may be several years old—come on, admit it), and compare it to some freshly grated. The freshly grated smells sweet, fragrant, almost citrusy, and, well, fresh. The pre-ground smells sharp and musky by comparison.

This isn't to say that there's no place for pre-ground nutmeg in the pantry alongside the whole nutmeg—it's convenient, after all—but I like to think of them as different spices. If a recipe calls for pre-ground nutmeg, go ahead and use it (provided it's not more than six months old). But when a recipe like the Pecan Pineapple Upside-Down Cake on p. 60 calls for freshly grated nutmeg, please don't be tempted to substitute—the results won't be nearly as nice.



plan ahead for juicy turkey

Space-saving brining tips

The hardest thing about brining a turkey is finding the space to store it in its brine. Author Ris Lacoste ("Plan Ahead for a Delicious Thanksgiving," p. 44) likes to brine her turkey in a 5-gallon pot, but with your refrigerator stuffed full of food around Thanksgiving time, you might be challenged to fit a large pot in there as well. And if you don't own such a large pot or bucket, you have a double conundrum. Here are a couple of alternative space-saving approaches to brining:

Use roasting or brining bags. Brining the turkey in a jumbo plastic bag uses less space and less brine than a pot does. Look in kitchen shops for turkey brining bags (see p. 92 for a mail-order source), and follow the instructions on the package. Or use the plastic turkey-cooking bags found in the plastic wrap and foil section of the supermarket. Just double up the bags (for leak protection) and add the turkey, breast side down. Put the bagged turkey in a roasting pan or bowl (again, for leak protection) and add enough brine to

fill the inner bag about halfway up the turkey. Then tightly close the opening of each bag with a twist-tie, eliminating as much air as possible from the inner bag to force the brine to surround the turkey, and refrigerate.

Brine in a cooler. Using a clean cooler means the turkey won't be in the fridge at all—nice if you're really crunched for space. The challenge here is that you need to add ice to keep the turkey cold, but you don't want the melting ice to dilute your brine too much. To offset the ice-melt, use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra kosher salt in your brine. Make sure the brine is refrigerator-cold before pouring it over the turkey in the cooler. Add enough ice to submerge the turkey in brine—you'll need 5 to 10 pounds, depending on the cooler. Store the cooler in the coldest location you can think of. If that happens to be outdoors, put it in a place where animals can't get to it, like a screened porch or your car.

—Allison Ehri Kreidler,
test kitchen associate

A favorite nutmeg grater

Truthfully, you don't really need a special nutmeg grater—the side of a box grater with the little crown-shaped protrusions does the job. But as someone who loves gadgets that are truly useful, I've grown fond of this little number from Microplane because it's more than just a grater. It has two sides that lock together for storage. One side holds whole nutmegs, so when you want fresh nutmeg you don't have to hunt for the grater and the spice; they're already together. The other side is a little box with a flat grater attachment. The box collects the nutmeg as it's grated, and then you can either slide back the grater part to collect the nutmeg for measuring, or you can turn the whole thing over and use it as a sprinkler (the nutmeg falls back through the grater holes). Look for it in kitchenwares shops, or see p. 92 for a mail-order source.

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Here's how to roll out perfect piecrust

There's no denying it: Piecrusts are one of the hardest things for a home cook to master. When it comes to rolling them out, experience counts for a lot, but good techniques are crucial, too. Here are some of our best pointers for rolling out lovely, even rounds of dough.

Start with dough at the right temperature

If it's too warm and soft, it'll stick like crazy to the rolling pin and the work surface, forcing you to add too much flour as you work it. Dough that's too cold and hard resists rolling and cracks if you try to force it. Press the dough lightly to check its rolling readiness—your fingertips should leave an imprint but shouldn't easily sink into the dough.

Go easy on the flour

Even dough that's at the perfect temperature needs a little extra flour to keep it from sticking, but try not to use more than you really need—the more extra flour you work into the dough as you roll it, the drier and tougher the crust will be.

Try an alternative rolling surface

Beyond the usual lightly floured countertop, other options for rolling surfaces include a pastry cloth (our current favorite, shown at right, especially when paired with a cloth rolling pin cover), a silicone rolling mat (brand name Roul'Pat; see p. 92 for sources), and sheets of parchment, waxed paper, or plastic wrap. Choose whichever one you like best.

Use the fewest possible passes of the rolling pin

Overworked dough equals tough crust, so the less you have to work it during rolling, the better.

Roll around the clock

Start with the rolling pin in the center of your dough disk. Roll toward 12 o'clock, easing up on the pressure as you near the edge (this keeps the edge from getting too thin). Pick up the pin and return it to center. Roll toward 6 o'clock, as shown at top right. Repeat this motion toward 3 and then 9 o'clock, always easing up the pressure near the edges and then picking up the pin rather than rolling it back to center. Continue to roll around the clock, aiming for different "times" (like 1, 7, 4, 10) on each round until the dough is the right width and thickness, as shown at bottom right.

Turn the dough and check often for sticking. After each round of the clock, run a bench knife underneath the dough, as shown at center right, to make sure it's not sticking, and reflower the surface if necessary. When you do this, give the dough a quarter turn—most people inevitably use uneven pressure when rolling in one direction versus another, so the occasional turn helps average it out for a more even thickness.



Can't find any buttermilk?

Cultured buttermilk lends moistness and a light tanginess to the Pecan Pineapple Upside-Down Cake on p. 60 and the Bourbon-Glazed Brown Sugar Pecan Poundcake on p. 62. Like regular milk, buttermilk comes in whole, low-fat, and nonfat varieties, and author Karen Barker likes to use whole buttermilk for these desserts. It's readily available in the southeastern United States, where she lives, because it's a popular ingredient in that region. But in other areas, the selection is usually limited to low-fat and nonfat buttermilk.

Fortunately, all buttermilks are interchangeable in baking. With higher fat buttermilk, the results may be slightly richer, but because most baked goods get plenty of fat from butter or oil, the difference is hard to detect.

In some places, buttermilk of any kind can be hard to find. If you live in one of these areas, try one of the following substitutions—the results won't be quite the same as with buttermilk, but they all work in a pinch.

Try one of these substitutions:

Dried buttermilk powder

You can't reconstitute it to make buttermilk, but it's a handy baking ingredient. You add the powder to the dry ingredients and water to the wet ingredients before mixing (check the package for specifics). At the market, look for dried buttermilk either in the baking section or near other powdered milk.



Soured milk

Add 1 Tbs. lemon juice or white vinegar to 1 cup whole, low-fat, or nonfat milk and let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes.



Yogurt

Substitute whole-milk or low-fat plain yogurt, thinned if necessary with milk or water to the consistency of buttermilk.



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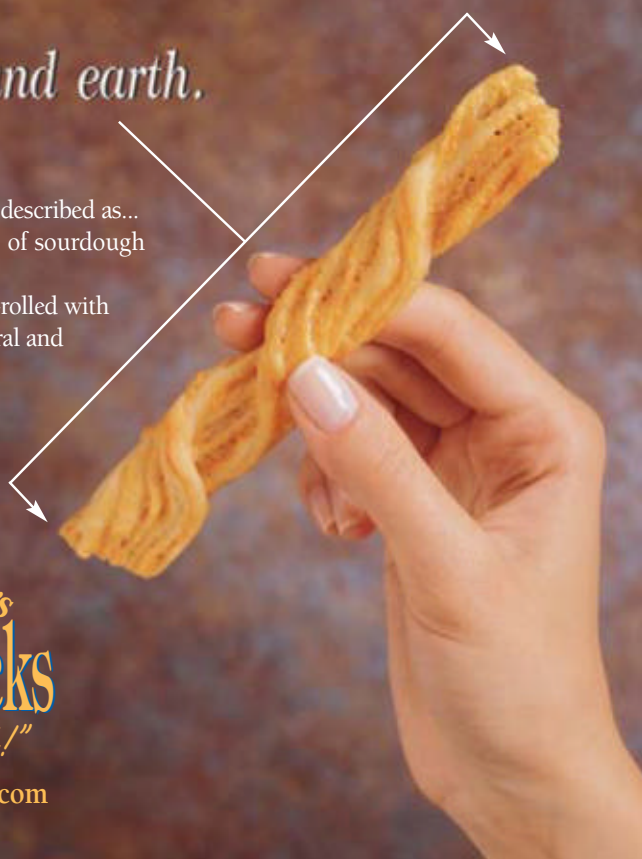
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ingredient

Tofu

If ever there was a food with an image problem, it would have to be tofu. Though it's been popular in Asia for centuries, many Westerners still think of it as something only vegetarians eat. Why choose bland tofu if you can have a juicy steak instead? Here's why: Tofu is just too good for you to ignore. It's a taste worth acquiring.



What it is

Tofu (a.k.a. dofu or soybean curd) is made from soybeans, water, and a coagulant, such as calcium sulfate, nigari (a natural sea salt extract), magnesium chloride (also an extract of sea salt), calcium chloride (derived from a mineral ore), vinegar, or lemon or lime juice. It has a soft texture that's vaguely similar to cheese, but its mild, plain flavor is not at all cheesy.

As a soyfood, it's full of low-fat, cholesterol- and saturated-fat-free protein, and it's high in calcium and vitamins. Not only is it good for your heart, it may also protect against cancer and osteoporosis.

How to buy & store it

Blocks of tofu come in different firmnesses, from silken to extra-firm; the firmness influences the

way you use it (see next column). It's available plain or flavored, smoked, and even baked. Fresh tofu comes packaged in water, and there's also shelf-stable tofu available in aseptic packages. We tend to prefer the fresh-water-packed tofu; most grocery stores carry it in a refrigerator case in the produce section. Be sure to check the expiration date before buying.

Store unopened fresh tofu in the fridge. After opening, keep leftover tofu covered and submerged in fresh water. Change the water daily, keep it cold, and the tofu should last for about a week. Throw it out when it begins to smell sour.

If you have leftover firm or extra-firm tofu, you can drain and freeze it, which actually gives it a meatier texture. Frozen, well-wrapped tofu stays good for three to five months.

How to use it

You can eat tofu raw or cooked. Plain tofu is very mild, so it can be flavored in any way imaginable.

Silken tofu is smooth and custardy. It blends into a lush, creamy texture that's good for dressings, dips, creamy desserts like cheesecake and puddings, and smoothies, like the one below. **Soft tofu** isn't as smooth as silken, but it also blends well into dips, sauces, and soups. Crumbled, it makes a pleasing addition to tossed salads. Or try sautéing crumbled soft tofu as an addition to or substitution for scrambled eggs.

Both **firm and extra-firm tofu** are dense and hold their shape better than silken and soft tofu do. Their porous texture allows them to absorb marinades really well. Cut them into cubes or slices and try grilling, broiling, sautéing, or stir-frying them, as in our recipe for Seared Baby Bok Choy with Tofu & Shiitakes on p. 98a.

Even extra-firm tofu is still fragile, though, so to keep its shape as intact as possible when sautéing and stir-frying, cook it

separately or wait to add it until near the end and cook no longer than five minutes. We especially like to fry firm tofu in a little oil to give it a golden crust that's a great contrast to its inner texture. You can also crumble and sauté firm tofu for an unusual addition to chili or meat sauces.

Before using, all water-packed tofu needs draining. Cut a slit in the packaging, turn upside down over the sink, and drain as much as possible before fully opening. That's all you need to do with silken tofu, since it'll fall apart with any more handling. Rinse and pat dry soft, firm, and extra-firm tofu. They're ready to go at this point, but you might want to further dry and increase their firmness by pressing them: Sandwich the tofu between paper or cloth towels and put it on a plate or something else to contain the water. Set a heavy skillet or pot on top and refrigerate for as little as 10 minutes or up to an hour, depending on how much drier and firmer you want the tofu to be.

Strawberry-Orange-Vanilla Breakfast Smoothie

Serves one.

Not only do we like this for breakfast, but we've also been known to whip one up in the test kitchen when we need a little pick-me-up during a busy day of recipe testing and food styling. You'll be surprised to taste how smooth, creamy, and tangy it is, especially considering that it contains no yogurt or other dairy products.

8 frozen strawberries
About ¼ lb. plain silken tofu
⅓ cup orange juice
2 Tbs. honey; more to taste
½ tsp. pure vanilla extract

Combine all of the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Serve in a chilled glass.





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What's a pappadam?

Indian pappadams are tortilla-size, paper-thin, crisp wafers with a lovely nutty flavor. Made from lentil, chickpea, or rice flour, they're available plain or accented with cumin, pepper, garlic, or chile. Usually served as a snack or as part of a meal, they add an unusual flourish to the Spinach Salad with Apples, Dried Apricots & Pappadam Croutons on p. 66.

Look for them in Indian markets and in supermarkets with Indian food sections. Also spelled papad,

papadum, pappadum, and poppadum, they come dried and need to be cooked briefly by frying, toasting, microwaving, or broiling (as in the salad recipe). If you can't find them at a market, see p. 92 for a mail-order source or try an Indian restaurant. They'll sell them already cooked, so if you're making the spinach salad, skip the broiling step. Well-wrapped cooked pappadams stay crisp for at least a day.

—A.E.K.

Keeping brown sugar moist

It seems like every time I need brown sugar, the package in my pantry has completely dried out and become a rock-like mass. Frustrated by this constant problem, I decided to try several methods of keeping brown sugar moist to see if one is better than the rest.

My mom always put a slice of apple in with her brown sugar, but it would eventually shrivel up. I tried keeping a piece of bread in my sugar, but it got moldy. Next I tried a damp paper towel on top of the sugar, but that caused it to become soggy in some spots and crystallized in others.

Call me a slow learner, but I finally found the solution. Now I leave the sugar in its original bag and close the top loosely with tape, a rubber band, or a clip. Then I put it in a zip-top plastic bag and tuck in a damp paper towel. This way, the paper towel doesn't touch the sugar and make it soggy, but it keeps the air around the bag of sugar humid enough that there's no rock formation going on. I just change the towel every once in a while, and my brown sugar stays soft and moist for months. —A.E.K.

leftovers



Turkey hash for breakfast, lunch, or dinner

Thanksgiving leftovers are as much a part of the holiday tradition as the turkey itself. You probably already have a few favorites when it comes to using up the bird, but if you're looking for something new this year, try this hash. If hash for breakfast isn't your thing, pair it with a salad for lunch or dinner.

Turkey & Sweet Potato Hash

Serves four.

- 3 oz. bacon, sliced crosswise into 1/3-inch-wide pieces (about 3 slices)**
- 1 small yellow onion, small diced**
- 2 cups medium-small-diced (about 1/3 inch) sweet potatoes (1 medium potato)**
- 1 cup leftover turkey broth (p. 47) or low-salt chicken broth**
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 2 cups leftover white and dark roasted turkey meat with skin (p. 48), roughly chopped**
- 1 heaping Tbs. chopped fresh parsley**
- 1 Tbs. maple syrup**
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary**
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more to taste**
- A few dashes Tabasco or other hot sauce; more to taste**
- Kosher salt**

Cook the bacon in a 10-inch skillet (preferably cast iron) over medium-high heat until crisp, about 4 minutes. Use a slotted

spoon to transfer the bacon to a medium bowl. Pour off and discard all but 1 Tbs. fat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the sweet potatoes, broth, and butter to the onions. Simmer, uncovered, until the sweet potatoes are just barely tender, about 6 minutes.

Meanwhile mix the turkey, parsley, maple syrup, rosemary, pepper, and Tabasco with the bacon.

When the potatoes are barely tender, add the turkey mixture to the skillet. Cook over medium-high heat, firmly patting the hash down and then occasionally flipping, scraping the bottom of the pan with a metal spatula and patting down again, until the broth has completely evaporated and the hash is nicely browned, about 8 minutes (reduce the heat if the hash is browning too quickly). Season to taste with salt, pepper, and hot sauce.

—A.E.K. ♦

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Help!

Thanksgiving Is Driving Me Crazy

BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

No doubt about it, Thanksgiving is a high-pressure meal. It's enough to make any cook feel shaky. All those dishes! All those guests! Though we probably can't help you with Aunt Louise's meddling or Uncle Lenny's bad jokes, we can definitely teach you how to get your turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, and vegetables to behave themselves.

A juicy turkey with crisp brown skin

the problem: After many years of dry turkey, last-year, I gave brining a try. It really helped with juiciness, but the skin wasn't as browned and crisp as usual. Can't I have both?

the solution:

With a little tinkering, you certainly can have a turkey with juicy meat and crisp skin—and brining is a great start. Turkey, especially the white meat, is prone to drying out because it's very lean and also because white meat cooks faster than dark meat, so the breast ends up overcooked by the time the legs and thighs are done. When you soak a turkey in salty water, or brine, the meat's tightly wound protein strands loosen and form a spongy matrix that sops up brine, and the meat becomes packed with extra moisture, which helps the white meat stay juicy until the dark meat is fully cooked.

All that extra juiciness, though, can potentially interfere with the

molecular reactions that turn turkey skin brown and tasty. Brining leaves extra moisture on the surface of the turkey, which prevents the skin from getting hot enough for browning reactions to occur. Browning reactions, which alter the amino acids and sugars present in the skin, require hot, dry conditions.

But brining and browning aren't mutually exclusive. Simply pat the turkey's skin dry before it goes into the oven, preferably a very hot oven—the hotter the oven, the more quickly the skin will dry out completely and the browning can begin. Once you've got the browning underway, you can lower the oven temperature for the remaining cooking time.

Greener green beans

the problem: Green beans always turn a disappointing dull color when I cook them. Am I cooking them wrong?

the solution:

You're not necessarily cooking them wrong; you're just cooking them too long. Green beans get their vibrant color from the pigment chlorophyll. But chlorophyll, unfortunately, loses its luster in the presence of acids, and when a green bean cooks, its cells break-down, allowing natural acids to escape and react with the bean's chlorophyll. To curtail color loss, simply limit the cooking time. You could toss the beans in a hot sauté pan or wok for a few minutes and serve them crisp-tender. Or if you prefer your beans cooked through, steam or boil for up to five minutes and promptly drain them. If you serve them immediately, their color should still be pretty.

That said, color isn't everything. Slow-cooked green beans have a depth of flavor that more than makes up for their lack of good looks. If you do go the quick-cooking route, though, just be sure you don't dull the beans' brilliance by dressing them too early with an acidic sauce—wait until right before serving.

Deodorizing Brussels sprouts

the problem: I'd like to serve Brussels sprouts, but can I prepare them without stinking up the house?

the solution:

Sure, just don't overcook them. Brussels sprouts, as well as other potentially malodorous vegetables like kale and collard greens, are members of the cabbage family. These plants contain sulfur compounds called isothiocyanates in their cells. During cooking, these compounds break down, forming other compounds, some of them terribly stinky; hydrogen sulfide, for example, smells like rotten eggs. The longer these sulfur compounds cook, the more they break down and the stinkier they get, so to minimize offensive odors, you have to minimize cooking. Try a fast cooking method such as sautéing, steaming, stir-frying, or blanching, and cook just until the Brussels sprouts are crisp-tender—they'll taste great.

But if you and your family really love Brussels sprouts, no one's likely to object to their odor, so go ahead and roast them or make your favorite gratin recipe—just throw open a few windows to air out the kitchen. And, honestly, as long they're not cooked to mush, the sprouts really shouldn't smell too bad.

Lump-free gravy

the problem: How can I keep lumps from forming in my gravy?

the solution:

When you make gravy, what you're doing, essentially, is dissolving tasty pan drippings in liquid and thickening the mixture with flour (or another starch). And how you add the flour makes all the difference. If you add the flour directly to the simmering liquid, you'll get lumps. Such lumps form because hot liquid causes the starch molecules on the surface of the flour to almost instantly gelatinize—that is, the starches swell, burst, and become sticky. The gelatinized starch forms a waterproof coating around the lump. Squeeze open one of these lumps, and you'll find dry flour inside.

To prevent lumps, you need to keep the grains of flour from touching one another. You can accomplish this by mixing the flour into cool liquid and then stirring this slurry into the warm or hot liquid that you want to thicken. Or if there's fat in the pan with the drippings, you can cook equal parts flour and fat together to make a roux. In a roux, fat coats the starch granules so that they won't stick together when they encounter hot liquid.

Fluffiest mashed potatoes

the problem: My mashed potatoes are never as light and fluffy as I'd like. What's the secret?

the solution:

Actually, there are three secrets: the right taters, the right technique, and the right tool.

1. The taters: High-starch varieties, such as russet and Idaho, give the fluffiest results because of the way their starch behaves during cooking. The microscopic starch granules in these potatoes' cells separate and swell as they sponge up moisture that's naturally present in the potato; as a result, the cooked potatoes' texture seems dry and fluffy. The starches in medium- or low-starch varieties such as

Yukon Gold and red potatoes, on the other hand, tend to stick together, giving them a denser, moister texture that becomes creamy (or even sticky) when mashed.

2. The technique: Dry out the potatoes, and add the fat before the liquid. Waterlogged potatoes will give you a gummy mash, so if you cook the potatoes by peeling and boiling them, then you should return the potatoes to the pan after you've drained them and mash them over low heat, letting the potatoes dry out for a few minutes.

Or use a cooking method that prevents the potatoes from sopping up too much water in the first place: steaming, for example, or boiling the potatoes whole in their skins. Then, after you've mashed them, stir in the butter—the fat will coat the starches

and help prevent them from absorbing additional moisture when you add the milk, cream, or other liquid.

3. The tool: Use a ricer, a potato masher, or a food mill, because any tool that you need to plug in (e.g., a food processor or electric mixer) is likely to overwork the potatoes, causing the starch granules to burst, release their sticky contents, and turn your mashed potatoes into a gluey mess.

Kimberly Y. Masibay is an editor at large for Fine Cooking. ♦

Cottage Cheese

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

A creamy, tangy addition to mixed salads and a perfect accompaniment to fresh fruit, cottage cheese is also used to tenderize baked goods in lieu of sour cream (as in the fast cinnamon rolls on p. 70). To find out which brands are best to buy, 11 *Fine Cooking* staffers participated in a blind tasting of 10 widely available cottage

cheeses: five made with whole milk and five made with low-fat milk. While results were far from unanimous, our panel gravitated toward a moister, looser style of cottage cheese. Unsurprisingly, whole-milk cheeses had higher overall scores than low-fat ones. Read on to find out our favorites in each category.

Whole-milk Listed in order of preference; prices may vary.



1 Breakstone's
\$3.39 (16 oz.)

Rich and creamy with a good sweet-and-sour balance (it reminded some of sour cream) and a pleasant, lingering flavor, this cottage cheese got top marks. We also liked its smooth, creamy texture with uniform curds.



2 Horizon
\$3.99 (16 oz.)

This cottage cheese had huge curds that looked a bit like small pebbles. Despite its unusual appearance, it had a rich milk flavor, a good salt balance, and a nice yogurt-like tanginess. And the intimidating curds ended up being quite soft to the bite.



3 Friendship
\$2.69 (16 oz.)

If you're a fan of a drier style of cottage cheese, look no further. This one's for you, though it was too dry and heavy for some panelists. And while several thought it tasted fresh and pleasantly tangy, for others it was a bit too sour and salty.



4 Organic Valley
\$4.49 (16 oz.)

The mild, uninteresting flavor and watery, mushy texture of this cottage cheese didn't make it a favorite. "It tastes like it could be low-fat," said one taster. The chewy texture and uneven size of the curds didn't help either.



5 Cabot
\$2.69 (16 oz.)

This cottage cheese didn't win much praise with its soupy texture and unevenly sized curds. The flavor was clean but bland with a slightly bitter finish. It would also benefit from a little more salt.

Low-fat Listed in order of preference; prices may vary.



1 Friendship
\$2.69 (16 oz.)

The pronounced milk flavor, good salt balance, and pleasant tanginess of this cottage cheese won us over and made us almost forget it was low-fat. The texture was on the dry side, but the flavor was by far the best of the bunch.



2 Breakstone's
\$3.27 (16 oz.)

This cottage cheese had a decent milk flavor and a pleasant "watermelon-like" hint of sweetness. But it was the thin, watery texture and soft, mushy curds that threw us off.



3 Light n' Lively
\$3.27 (24 oz.)

The good looks and creamy texture of this cottage cheese are undeniable, but we found it disappointing in the flavor department. It was too salty and had a vaguely grassy quality and a slightly processed aftertaste.



4 Organic Valley
\$4.99 (16 oz.)

This loose, watery cottage cheese had a strange slippery texture and soft curds that fell apart easily. Its flavor, too, was unimpressive. Bland and waterlogged, it still managed to be both too sour and too salty.



5 Horizon
\$3.99 (16 oz.)

Too "lean-tasting," this cottage cheese didn't deliver the full milk flavor we expect, even from low-fat cheeses. Just like its whole-milk counterpart, it had huge, pebble-like curds, but these were dry and rubbery. ♦

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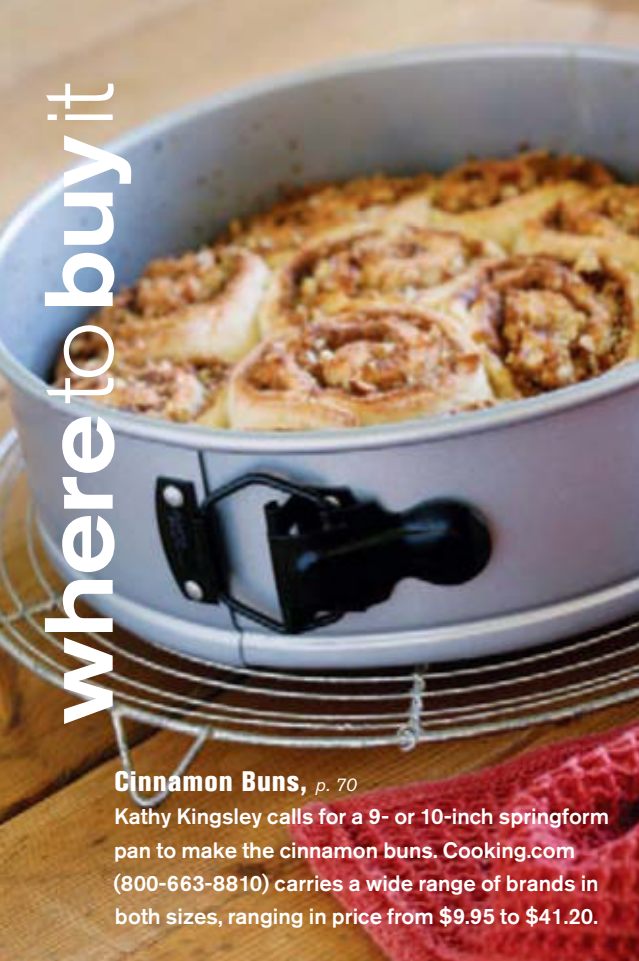
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Cinnamon Buns, p. 70

Kathy Kingsley calls for a 9- or 10-inch springform pan to make the cinnamon buns. Cooking.com (800-663-8810) carries a wide range of brands in both sizes, ranging in price from \$9.95 to \$41.20.

Roasted Vegetables, p. 53

The only equipment you'll need for these vegetables is a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet. If you don't have one, try Analon's commercial bakeware line (they call it a 13 x 18-inch jelly roll pan); it's \$14.99 at PotsAndPans.com (800-450-0156). For convenience, you can get 100 sheets of parchment sized to fit your baking sheet for \$18.95 from King Arthur Flour (KingArthurFlour.com; 800-827-6836).



Pecan Desserts, p. 58

Shelled pecans are widely available in supermarkets, but in-shell pecans can be slightly harder to find. For our photo shoot, we ordered both kinds from the Green Valley Pecan Company (PecanStore.com; 800-327-3226), where a 1-pound bag of shelled pecan halves is \$7, and a 5-pound bag of in-shell pecans is \$18.



Spinach Salads, p. 64

One of Joanne Weir's spinach salads calls for pappadams, which are thin, crunchy Indian flatbreads made from lentil, chickpea, or rice flour. Joanne likes the Shakti brand (Pappadam.com), which she buys locally. Kalustyans.com (800-352-3451) also carries several brands; we liked the Madras brand at \$3.99 for a 200-gram pack. You can also find packaged pappadams in stores that sell Indian food and spices, or you can buy them freshly made at your local Indian restaurant. (For more on pappadams, see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 78.)

Bean and Vegetable Soups, p. 73

If you're in the market for a Dutch oven for soup-making, visit ChefsResource.com (866-765-2433) for many Staub and Le Creuset Dutch ovens in 4- to 5-quart sizes.

In Season, p. 24

You can mail-order several varieties of sage plants from the Sandy Mush Herb Nursery in Leicester, North Carolina (SandyMushHerbs.com; 828-683-2014). The Thyme Garden Herb Company in Alsea, Oregon (ThymeGarden.com; 541-487-8671), offers several varieties of organically grown sage plants.

Wine, p. 36

While wines from Oregon and Washington are widely available, some of the other bottles featured here may be harder to find outside their production area. Well-stocked wine stores, however, usually carry a good selection of American wines. Tim Gaiser also recommends using the search engine Wine-Searcher.com, which can locate practically any wine and provide you with retailer contact information.

Equipment, p. 28

Soy milk can be made only from canned or dried soybeans, which you can buy at most health-food stores or in bulk online (10 pounds for \$8 at FairviewFarms.com; 888-526-9296). Don't use edamame, which is the Japanese name for green vegetable soybeans. These are the immature, green form of edible soybeans.

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 78

If you're looking for a brining bag for your turkey, try a Grill Friends' brining bag, \$7.99 each at LaPrimaShops.com (866-983-7467). Microplane's Grate-N-Shake spice grater sells for \$9.95 at US.Microplane.com (800-555-2767). To buy a Roul'Pat, visit DemarleUSA.com (888-353-9726). They come in two sizes: 16½ x 24½ inches for \$44 and 31½ x 23 inches for \$57. ♦



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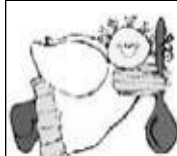
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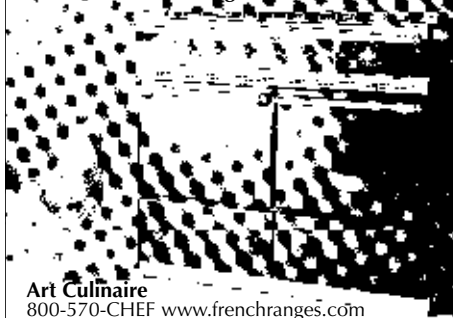
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Recipe	Page	Calories		Protein	Carb	Fats (g)				Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes
		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)	
In Season	24												
Pork Tenderloin w/ Sage & Marsala Sauce		300	120	28	5	14	6	6	1	95	200	0	based on 4 servings
Thanksgiving Menu	44												
Herb-Butter Roasted Turkey w/ Pinot Noir Gravy		780	420	74	7	47	21	14	7	270	1650	0	based on 12 servings
Sausage-Maple Bread Stuffing		430	190	17	42	22	9	7	2.5	65	800	3	based on 12 servings
Classic Mashed Potatoes		470	270	5	46	30	19	8	1	95	560	5	based on 12 servings
Cranberry Sauce w/ Vanilla, Maple Syrup & Cassis		100	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	based on 12 servings
Broccoli w/ Eggs & Lemony Parmesan Breadcrumbs		200	150	5	8	17	10	4.5	1	95	370	3	based on 12 servings
Sweet Potato Gratin w/ Caramelized Onions		360	230	4	31	25	12	9	2.5	65	150	5	based on 12 servings
Roasted Vegetables	53												
Roasted Fennel w/ Rosemary-Thyme-Lemon Oil		100	60	1	8	7	1	5	0.5	0	200	4	based on 4 servings
Roasted Butternut Squash w/ Moroccan-Style Rub		70	30	1	10	3.5	0	2.5	0	0	140	3	based on 4 servings
Roasted Asparagus w/ Sesame Salt		50	40	2	3	4	0.5	2.5	0.5	0	250	1	based on 4 servings
Roasted Green Beans w/ Caramelized Shallot Butter		100	60	2	9	7	2.5	3.5	0.5	10	190	4	based on 4 servings
Roasted Carrots w/ Ginger-Lemon-Soy Splash		70	30	1	10	3.5	0.5	2.5	0	0	260	3	based on 4 servings
Roasted Broccoli w/ Toasted Garlic & Coriander Oil		140	100	3	8	12	1.5	8	1	0	360	3	based on 3 servings
Pecan Desserts	58												
Apple Crisp w/ Pecans & Orange		480	200	4	70	23	9	9	3.5	30	60	6	based on 8 servings
Bourbon-Glazed Brown Sugar Pecan Poundcake		790	370	9	91	42	17	16	6	150	170	3	based on 12 servings
Chocolate Espresso Pecan Pie		650	380	8	66	42	12	18	8	110	120	5	based on 10 servings
Pecan Pineapple Upside-Down Cake		360	180	3	43	20	9	7	2	70	115	1	based on 12 servings
Spinach Salads	64												
Warm Spinach Salad w/ Eggs, Bacon & Croutons		190	120	5	13	14	2.5	9	1.5	75	460	2	based on 6 servings
Spinach Salad w/ Chicken, Cashews & Ginger		230	120	17	15	13	2.5	6	3	35	510	3	based on 6 servings
Garlic Crostini w/ Spinach & Mushroom Salad		180	90	5	20	10	1.5	7	1.5	0	360	3	based on 6 servings
Spinach Salad w/ Apples, Apricots & Pappadams		250	130	7	32	15	1.5	10	2.5	0	190	7	based on 6 servings
Linguine with Clam Sauce	68												
Linguine w/ Clam Sauce		670	270	31	63	30	4	20	4	50	330	4	based on 3 servings
Cinnamon Buns	70												
Fastest Cinnamon Buns		300	120	5	40	13	4.5	6	2.5	15	290	2	per bun
Apple-Butter Cinnamon Buns		260	100	6	35	11	4.5	2	3.5	15	290	1	per bun
Bean & Vegetable Soups	73												
Mexican Black Bean Soup		320	120	18	33	14	4	7	1.5	15	660	10	based on 6 servings
Middle-Eastern Chickpea Soup		270	90	13	35	10	1.5	5	3	0	260	8	based on 6 servings
French Farmers' Soup		300	80	16	40	9	2	5	1.5	5	470	9	based on 6 servings
Cabbage & White Bean Soup		270	80	15	34	9	2	5	1.5	5	360	9	based on 6 servings
Minestrone		280	130	15	25	15	3.5	8	2	15	730	8	based on 6 servings
Test Kitchen	78												
Breakfast Smoothie		270	30	7	54	3.5	0	0.5	2	0	10	2	based on 1 serving
Turkey & Sweet Potato Hash		330	140	24	20	16	7	5	2.5	80	540	2	based on 4 servings
Quick & Delicious	98a												
Sesame Chicken w/ Ginger & Snow Peas		310	170	26	10	19	2.5	9	6	65	800	2	based on 4 servings
Hoisin Pork w/ Napa Cabbage		290	130	26	12	15	2	8	3.5	65	1190	3	based on 4 servings
Curried Coconut Shrimp		350	240	20	10	27	14	7	3.5	170	610	3	based on 4 servings
Spicy Beef w/ Peanuts & Chiles		350	210	27	8	23	5	12	5	45	1040	1	based on 4 servings
Seared Baby Bok Choy w/ Tofu & Shiitakes		400	290	15	16	33	3	19	9	0	700	3	based on 2 servings
Stir-Fried Noodles w/ Beef & Vegetables		390	220	14	29	24	3.5	12	7	20	1320	2	based on 4 servings
Orange Chicken w/ Scallions		430	160	36	30	18	2	9	5	85	830	1	based on 3 servings

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional

ingredients with measured amounts are included; ingredients without specific quantities are not. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

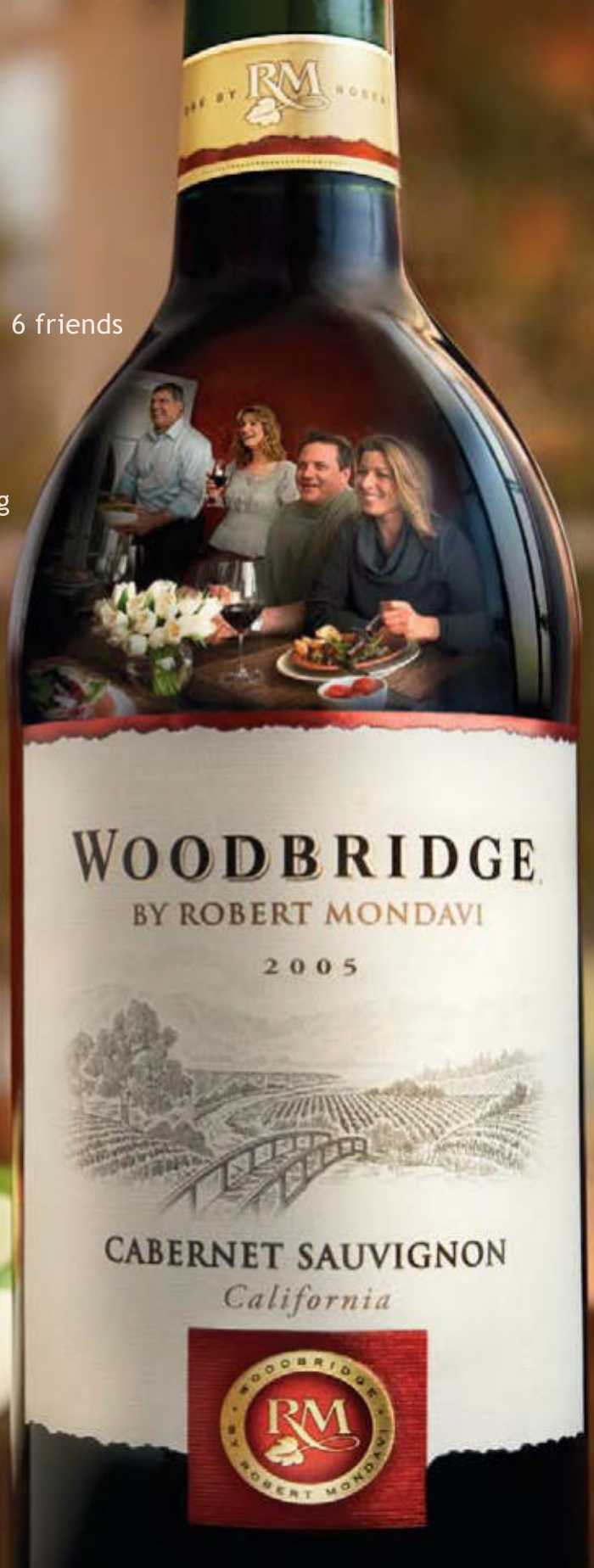
quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and ⅛ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.

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74



54



67



20



72



62



98a



50



26



52



69

A flash in the pan: speedy stir-fries

BY TONY ROSENFELD

As seductive as picking up the telephone and ordering in on a busy weeknight may be, you can throw together the following stir-fries quicker than it takes a delivery person to get to your doorstep. Even better, these dishes are just as good as anything you'll find in a to-go carton. If you've ever made a stir-fry, you already know the preparation drill: Make sure to get all of your slicing and dicing done first, because once you start cooking, things move quickly (see below for more tips). So put down that phone and start chopping, because dinner is on the way.

for the best stir-fries

Cut the ingredients uniformly so that they will cook evenly.

Use a stir-fry pan if you have one. (See Equipment, p. 28, for more on stir-fry pans.) If not, use a heavy skillet with a large surface area, which will give the ingredients enough space to sear properly.

Make sure your pan is hot before cooking so the ingredients will brown but not stick.



Orange Chicken with Scallions

Serves two to three.

- 1 large navel orange**
- 1 Tbs. soy sauce**
- 1 Tbs. rice vinegar**
- 2 tsp. light brown sugar**
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes**
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt**
- 2 large egg whites**
- 1/3 cup cornstarch**
- 3 to 4 Tbs. canola or peanut oil**
- 4 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced (keep whites and greens separate)**

Using a vegetable peeler, shave the zest from the orange in long, wide strips. If necessary, remove any large patches of bitter white pith from the zest strips with a paring knife. Juice the orange into a small bowl and mix with the soy sauce, rice vinegar, brown sugar, and red pepper flakes.

Sprinkle the chicken with 1/2 tsp. of the salt. In a mini chopper or food processor, process the egg whites, cornstarch, and the remaining 1/4 tsp. salt until smooth. In a medium bowl, toss the chicken with the cornstarch batter.

Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet or

large stir-fry pan over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Using tongs, transfer about half the chicken to the pan. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, flipping every minute or so, until the chicken browns and crisps all over and is firm to the touch, 3 to 4 minutes. With clean tongs, transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the skillet (or 2 Tbs. oil if the pan seems very dry) and repeat the cooking process with the remaining chicken; transfer to the plate.

Put the orange zest strips in the skillet and cook, stirring, until they darken in spots, 15 to 30 seconds. Stir the orange juice mixture and add it to the pan. Let it boil for about 10 seconds and then add the chicken and the scallion whites. Cook, stirring often, until the sauce reduces to a glaze and the chicken is just cooked through—check by cutting into a thicker piece—1 to 2 minutes. If the chicken isn't cooked through but the glaze is cooking away, add a couple tablespoons of water and continue cooking. Serve sprinkled with the scallion greens.



Seared Baby Bok Choy with Tofu & Shiitakes

Serves two.

- ½ lb. extra-firm tofu**
- ⅓ cup low-salt chicken broth**
- 1½ Tbs. minced jarred jalapeño slices**
- 2 tsp. Asian sesame oil**
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar**
- 3 Tbs. canola oil**
- ½ lb. baby bok choy (about 2), split in half lengthwise**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt**
- 1½-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced (about 2 Tbs.)**
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced (about 1 Tbs.)**
- 3½ oz. fresh shiitakes, stemmed**

Drain and cut the tofu into ¾-inch-thick slices. Cut each slice crosswise into ½-inch-wide sticks (you should have fat, rectangular sticks). Put the tofu on paper towels and set aside. In a small bowl, mix the broth, jalapeño, sesame oil, and sugar.

Set a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until hot, about 1 minute. Add 1½ Tbs. of the canola oil and once it's shimmering hot, add the bok

choy, cut side down. Sprinkle with ½ tsp. of the salt and cook, without touching, until browned, about 2 minutes. Continue to cook, tossing, until the bok choy stems start to soften and wilt, about 2 minutes more. Transfer to a plate.

Add the remaining 1½ Tbs. canola oil and the ginger to the skillet and cook, stirring, until golden, about 1 minute. Add the garlic and let it sizzle for 10 seconds. Add the tofu and shiitakes, sprinkle with the remaining ½ tsp. salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms brown and soften, about 3 minutes.

Return the bok choy to the pan, add the broth mixture, and cook, tossing, until the sauce evenly coats the vegetables and the bok choy is tender, about 2 minutes. Serve immediately.

Note: For more on tofu, see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 78.



Hoisin Pork with Napa Cabbage

Serves four.

- 1 lb. pork tenderloin, cut into ¼-inch-thick strips (about 3 inches long)**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt; more to taste**
- 3 Tbs. hoisin sauce (I like Lee Kum Kee brand)**
- 2 Tbs. soy sauce**
- 1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
- 3 Tbs. canola or peanut oil**
- 2 tsp. minced garlic**
- 6 cups napa cabbage, cut into 1½-inch pieces (about ¾ lb.)**
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, thinly sliced, and cut into 2- to 3-inch lengths**
- ¼ cup thinly sliced fresh chives**

In a large bowl, season the pork with ½ tsp. of the salt. In a small bowl, mix the hoisin sauce, soy sauce, and vinegar.

Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet or large stir-fry pan over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add the pork and cook, stirring, until it browns

and loses most of its raw appearance, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the skillet. Add the garlic, and once it begins to sizzle, add the cabbage and pepper. Sprinkle with the remaining ½ tsp. salt and cook, stirring, until the cabbage starts to wilt, about 2 minutes.

Add the hoisin mixture, the pork, and half of the chives and cook, tossing, until heated through, about 1 minute. Let sit for 2 minutes off the heat (the cabbage will exude some liquid and form a rich broth), toss well again, and serve sprinkled with the remaining chives.



Curried Coconut Shrimp

Serves four.

½ cup coarsely shredded coconut, preferably unsweetened
3 Tbs. canola or peanut oil
1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
2 Tbs. coarsely chopped ginger
1 tsp. kosher salt; more to taste
2 tsp. Madras hot curry powder
¾ cup canned diced tomatoes with their juices
¾ cup coconut milk
Freshly ground black pepper
1 lb. shrimp (26 to 30 or 21 to 25 per lb.), peeled and deveined
⅓ cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 Tbs. fresh lime juice

In a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, toast the coconut, tossing often, until lightly browned, 2 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil in the skillet over medium heat until shimmering hot. Add the onion and ginger, sprinkle with ½ tsp. of the salt, and cook, stirring, until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the curry powder and cook, stirring, for

1 minute. Add the tomatoes and coconut milk and cook, stirring, until the mixture reduces slightly, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a blender and purée. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss the shrimp with the remaining ½ tsp. salt and several grinds of pepper. Rinse and dry the skillet. Set over medium-high heat until hot, 1 minute. Add the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil and once it's shimmering hot, add the shrimp. Cook without touching for about 2 minutes, allowing the shrimp to brown nicely. Flip and cook until they turn almost completely pink (but are not quite cooked through), about 1½ more minutes.

Add the curry sauce and simmer, stirring, until the shrimp are cooked through and the sauce is hot, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in half of the cilantro and half of the lime juice. Season to taste with more salt, pepper, and the remaining lime juice. Serve sprinkled with the toasted coconut and the remaining cilantro.



Stir-Fried Noodles with Beef & Vegetables

Serves four.

3 oz. bean threads (cellophane noodles) or thin rice noodles (see note below)
¼ cup canola or peanut oil
3 Tbs. soy sauce
1½ Tbs. Asian sesame oil
1½ Tbs. rice vinegar
1 Tbs. light brown sugar
½ lb. flank steak
Kosher salt
1 small zucchini (about 6 oz.), halved and thinly sliced crosswise into half circles
1 cup matchstick-cut or grated carrot (1 large carrot)
1 small yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced crosswise into half circles
1 Tbs. toasted sesame seeds

Bring a 3-qt. pot of water to a boil. Add the bean threads or rice noodles, remove from the heat, and let sit until just softened (they should still be plenty toothy), about 3 minutes. Drain in a colander and rinse well under cool, running water. Toss with 1 Tbs. of the canola or peanut oil, and spread out on a tray or large plate lined with paper towels.

In a small bowl, mix the soy sauce, sesame oil, rice vinegar, and brown sugar.

Trim the beef of excess fat and slice it thinly across the grain. Cut the slices into 2-inch pieces. Season the beef with salt.

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the canola or peanut oil in a 12-inch non-stick skillet or large stir-fry pan over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add the beef and cook, stirring, until it loses most of its raw appearance, about 1 minute. Transfer to a large plate.

Add the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil and the vegetables to the pan. Cook, stirring, until they start to soften, about 2 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and add the beef and the noodles. Stir the soy mixture and drizzle it over all. Cook, tossing until everything is evenly coated with the sauce and the vegetables are cooked through, about 3 minutes. Serve immediately, sprinkled with the sesame seeds.

Note: Traditionally, the noodles for this Korean favorite are made of sweet-potato starch, though bean threads or thin rice noodles are also fine.



Spicy Beef with Peanuts & Chiles

Serves four.

- 1 lb. flank steak, thinly sliced on the diagonal against the grain**
- 2 Tbs. soy sauce**
- 2 tsp. fish sauce**
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt; more to taste**
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice**
- 1 Tbs. light brown sugar**
- ¼ cup salted peanuts**
- 2 large shallots, coarsely chopped**
- 2 Thai or serrano chiles, stemmed and coarsely chopped (don't seed)**
- 3 Tbs. canola or peanut oil**
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro**
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh basil**

Toss the steak with 1 Tbs. of the soy sauce, 1 tsp. of the fish sauce, and the salt. Combine the remaining 1 Tbs. soy sauce and 1 tsp. fish sauce with 1 Tbs. of the lime juice and the brown sugar and set aside.

Pulse the peanuts, shallots, and chiles in a food processor

until finely chopped. Transfer to a small bowl.

Set a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until hot, about 1 minute. Add 1½ Tbs. of the oil and once it's shimmering, add the beef. Cook, stirring, until the beef just loses its raw appearance, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Reduce the heat to medium, add the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil and the shallot mixture, sprinkle with salt, and cook, stirring, until the shallots are soft, about 2 minutes.

Return the beef to the pan. Stir the soy mixture and add it, along with half of the cilantro and basil, and cook, stirring to let the flavors meld, 2 minutes. Season to taste with salt and serve sprinkled with the remaining lime juice, cilantro, and basil.



Sesame Chicken with Ginger & Snow Peas

Serves four.

- 1 to 1¼ lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts (2 to 3), very thinly sliced on the diagonal**
- 2 Tbs. soy sauce**
- 1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil**
- 1 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. rice vinegar**
- 2 Tbs. ketchup**
- 8 scallions**
- 6 oz. snow peas, trimmed (about 1½ cups)**
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger**
- 3 Tbs. canola oil**
- 2 Tbs. lightly toasted sesame seeds**

In a large bowl, toss the chicken with 1 Tbs. of the soy sauce, 1½ tsp. of the sesame oil, and 1 tsp. of the rice vinegar.

In a 1-cup liquid measuring cup or another bowl, combine ¼ cup water with the ketchup and the remaining 1 Tbs. soy sauce, 1 Tbs. vinegar, and 1½ tsp. sesame oil.

Trim the scallions and separate the dark-green tops from the light-green and white bottoms. Slice the tops into 2-inch pieces and the bottoms into thin rounds. Combine both in a medium bowl with the snow peas and ginger.

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet or large stir-fry pan over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add the chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until it loses most of its raw appearance, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a large plate.

Add the remaining 1½ Tbs. oil and the scallions, snow peas, and ginger, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the ginger and scallions start to brown, about 2 minutes.

Return the chicken to the pan and add the ketchup mixture and half of the sesame seeds. Cook, stirring, until the chicken is cooked through and the snow peas are crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes.

Transfer to a platter, sprinkle with the remaining sesame seeds, and serve.

Tip: Before cutting the chicken, freeze it for 10 minutes so that it firms up, making it easier to slice thinly.